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John Holland.

MEMOIRS  
OF  
JAMES MONTGOMERY.

BY  
*John Halliwell and James Esdaile*

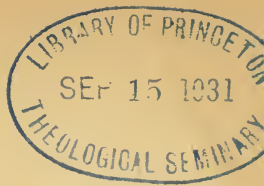
VOL. I.



*Windsor Castle, 1793.*

LONDON  
LONGMAN BROWN GREEN & LONGMANS  
PATERNOSTER ROW.





MEMOIRS

OF

THE LIFE AND WRITINGS

OF

JAMES MONTGOMERY,

INCLUDING

SELECTIONS FROM HIS CORRESPONDENCE, REMAINS IN PROSE  
AND VERSE, AND CONVERSATIONS ON VARIOUS  
SUBJECTS.

BY

JOHN HOLLAND AND JAMES EVERETT.

VOL. V.

" There is a living spirit in the lyre,  
A breath of music and a soul of fire ;  
It speaks a language to the world unknown ;  
It speaks that language to the bard alone."

*World before the Flood.*

L O N D O N :

LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, AND LONGMANS.

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# CONTENTS.

---

## CHAPTER LXVIII.

1831.

	Page
Conversation. — New Borough of Sheffield. — J. S. Buckingham. — Spring Flowers and Literary Labour. — Letter to G. Bennet. — Montgomery delivers Lectures in London. — Mrs. Cotterill. — Wilberforce. — Publication of Tyerman and Bennet's "Missionary Voyages and Travels." — Remarks on the Work. — British Association. — Letter to G. Bennet. — Conversation. — Incognito Fugitives. — Dr. Milnor of New York. — Hurricane in the West Indies. — Letter to J. Everett. — Montgomery at Manchester. — Conversations. — "Falkland's Dream." — Epitaph - - -	1

## CHAP. LXIX.

1832.

Journey to Bath. — Letter to George Bennet. — Disappointment of our Hopes often salutary. — American Colonisation Society. — Insurrection of Negroes in Jamaica. — Moravian Missionaries charged with Slaveholding. — Letter to James Everett. — Fragment of H. K. White. — Certificate of Connection with the American Board of Missions. — Passing of the Reform Bill. — Mr. Holland's Sojourn at Newcastle-upon-Tyne. — Conversation. — Letter from Ebenezer Elliott. — Letter to Miss Rowntree — To George Bennet. — The Cholera at Sheffield. — Montgomery's Activity during its Prevalence. — Letters : To John Holland — To Miss Rowntree. — Her Marriage, Death, and Character. — Thanksgiving Day on the Cessation of the Cholera. — First Election of Members of Parliament for Sheffield. — Rioting and Loss of Life - - -	32
---	----

## CHAP. LXX.

1833.

	Page
Montgomery elected President of the Sheffield Philosophical Society.—Atherstone's Lectures on Poetry.—Letter to James Everett.—Publication of Lectures delivered before the Royal Institution.—Letter from Mrs. Gales.—Moxon's Sonnets.—Conversations.—Letter to the Rev. R. Wood.—To George Bennet.—Illness of Montgomery.—Observance of the Sabbath.—Penal Punishments fatal to Health.—Verses to Harriet Montgomery.—"Village Magazine"	68

## CHAP. LXXI.

1834.

Causes of local Excitement.—Letter to the Rev. Samuel Dunn.—Thoughts of visiting America.—Letter to George Bennet.—Conversation.—"The Deity," a Poem.—Letter to Thomas Ragg.—To the Rev. J. Crowther.—To Miss Shepherd.—Abolition of Slavery.—The First of August.—Montgomery's Songs and Addresses on the Occasion.—Letter to Mrs. Ashley.—To Miss Sarah Gales.—The Cutlers' Feast.—Cholera Monument.—Minor Poems.—A "Fragment"	90
--	----

## CHAP. LXXII.

1835.

General Election.—Letter to John Blackwell.—Memoirs of Dante and Ariosto.—Letter to George Bennet.—Inscription for Monument of Lord de Dunstanville.—The "Poet's Portfolio."—Minor Pieces.—Montgomery visits Newcastle-upon-Tyne.—Religious Engagements there.—Receives a Notification of Royal Pension.—Objects of Interest in the Town.—Letter to George Bennet.—Party Spite.—Montgomery in London.—Dines at Sir Robert Peel's.—Declines to become a Candidate for Professorship of Rhetoric.—Letters to George Bennet	115
--	-----

## CHAP. LXXIII.

1835.

Montgomery returns to Sheffield.—Letter to George Bennet, —Mrs. Hofland's Description of the Poet at this Period. —His Visit to Dinsdale Spaw.—Rokeby.—Ballad writing. —Memoir of Tasso.—Wentworth House.—Anniversary of Coverdale's Bible.—Hannah Kilham.—Letters from and to Robert Montgomery the Poet	Page 148
--	-------------

## CHAP. LXXIV.

1836.

Montgomery removes from the Hartshead to the Mount.— Letter to Joseph Rowntree.—Delivery of Lectures on Poetry in Manchester.—Letter to Mr. Naylor.—Lectures at Leeds.—Chaucer and Butler.—Mrs. Spurr.—Intro- ductory Essay to "Horne's Commentary on the Psalms." —Lectures at Newcastle-upon-Tyne.—Movements and Conversation there.—Lectures at Sheffield.—Poetical Co- incidences.—Parabolic Sounding Board	169
--	-----

## CHAP. LXXV.

1836.

Montgomery attends Missionary Meetings at Bristol and Exeter.—Publication of his collected Poetical Works.— Letter to James Everett.—Passing Incidents.—Sojourn at Scarborough.—Montgomery and Wordsworth.—Poet- ical Compliment.—Letter from Wordsworth.—Lines. —Letter to Edward Farr.—Interview with Dr. Fisk.— Letter to Dr. Milnor.—To George Bennet.—Missionary Tour in Warwickshire.—Dinner in Compliment to Dr. Younge.—The "Tree of Life"	194
--	-----

## CHAP. LXXVI.

1837.

Public Meeting on the Caffre War.—Jan Tzatzoe and the London Missionaries.—Montgomery's Solicitude about	
---	--

	Page
the Proceedings. — Death of Rowland Hodgson. — Letter to George Bennet. — The "Christian Correspondent." — Conversation. — Letter to George Bennet. — Conder's "Choir and Oratory" reviewed. — Opinions on metrical Versions of Scripture. — Anapæstic Verses	- - 216

## CHAP. LXXVII.

1837.

Montgomery's present political Opinions. — Feelings relative to Parliamentary Honours and Duties. — Portraits of the Poet and the Rev. Robert Newton. — Law of Primogeniture. — Conversation. — Declines to allow himself to be nominated a Candidate to represent the Borough of Sheffield. — Lectures on the British Poets at the Royal Institution. — Letter to John Holland. — Poetry and Utilitarianism. — Letter to George Bennet. — Elegiac Verses. — The "First Passing Bell"	- - - - 240
---	-------------

## CHAP. LXXVIII.

1837.

Sheffield Manor and Queen's Tower. — Conversation. — The "Lot." — Mr. Sturge and the Moravian Missionaries. — Wath. — Begging Impostors. — Pleasant rural Ramble. — Montgomery's Description of local Scenery. — Letter to Mr. Moxon. — Conversation. — Balloon Ascent. — Essay on the "Imperfectness of the Materials of Historic Record." — Letter to George Bennet. — Smedley, the Poet. — Jeremiah Wiffen. — Public Education. — Revision of the Pension List. — Extracts from Letters	- 262
--	-------

## CHAP. LXXIX.

1838.

Death and Funeral of Miss Gales. — Verses to her Memory. — Letter to George Bennet. — To Rev. Robert Wood. — Life of Scott. — Visit to Hull. — Letter to George Ben-	
--	--

	Page
net — To Miss Mellin. — To William Sissons. — To George Bennet. — To Mrs. Foster and Mrs. Luck	- 295

## CHAP. LXXX.

1838.

Coronation of Queen Victoria. — Montgomery's Speeches and Verses on the Occasion. — Children's Meeting. — Letter to George Bennet. — Dr. Sparrow from U. S. — Conversation. — Mr. Thatcher. — Monument for "a Chris- tian Merchant" - - - - -	313
---	-----

## CHAP. LXXXI.

1838.

Walk to Beauchief Abbey. — Love of Flowers. — Letter to the "Far West." — Letter to the Rev. George Marsden. — Lectures at Bristol. — Chatterton. — Cottle. — Rey- nolds. — Bowles. — Sheffield Fever Wards. — Letter to George Bennet. — To John Holland - - - - -	332
---	-----

## CHAP. LXXXII.

1839.

Cholera Monument partly blown down. — Letter to Samuel Roberts. — To George Bennet. — Delivery of Lectures at Nottingham. — Curious begging Letter. — Hugh Mont- gomerie. — Laconic Compliments. — Bailey's "Festus." — Letter to George Bennet. — "Harvest Hymn." — Visit to the Potteries. — New Edition of Collected Poems. — Mont- gomery at Wentworth House. — Centenary of Methodism. — Letter to Rev. Barnabas Shaw. — To Rev. John Black- burn. — Verses. — Lectures at Bath. - - - - -	350
---	-----

## CHAP. LXXXIII.

1840.

New Year's Reflections. — Verses in a "Spirit's Book." — Penny Postage. — Letter to George Bennet. — Moravians.
--

	Page
— Keble's Version of the Psalms. — Sepia-Tint Drawings.	
— The Shot Skylark. — The Queen's Marriage. — Festival Celebrations of the Event. — Letter to Rev. Robert Wood. — To John Blackwell. — To George Bennet. — Lecture on the "Imperfectness of Historical Records." — Conversation. — Pickering's Portraits of Montgomery and Miss Gales. — Preparation of a new Edition of the "Missionary Voyages and Travels"	376

## CHAP. LXXXIV.

1840.

Rev. Peter Latrobe. — Visit to Raithby Hall. — Queen Adelaide. — Double Rainbow. — Sir Samuel Romilly. — Local Political Meeting. — Sonnet. — Interview with Mrs. Sigourney. — Lines to the Ashantee Princes. — Delivers Lectures on the Poets at Hull. — Andrew Marvell. — Rimius and the Moravians. — Rev. R. A. Willmot. — A Relic	404
---	-----

## APPENDIX.

(A).	427
(B). Woman's Lot. Part I	429
(C).	35



MEMOIRS  
OF  
THE LIFE AND WRITINGS  
OF  
JAMES MONTGOMERY.

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CHAPTER LXVIII.

1831.

CONVERSATION. — NEW BOROUGH OF SHEFFIELD. — J. S. BUCKINGHAM.  
— SPRING FLOWERS AND LITERARY LABOUR. — LETTER TO G. BENNET.  
— MONTGOMERY DELIVERS LECTURES IN LONDON. — MRS. COTTERILL.  
— WILBERFORCE. — PUBLICATION OF TYERMAN AND BENNET'S "MISSIONARY VOYAGES AND TRAVELS." — REMARKS ON THE WORK. — BRITISH ASSOCIATION. — LETTER TO G. BENNET. — CONVERSATION. — INCOGNITO FUGITIVES. — DR. MILNOR OF NEW YORK. — HURRICANE IN THE WEST INDIES. — LETTER TO J. EVERETT. — MONTGOMERY AT MANCHESTER. — CONVERSATIONS. — "FALKLAND'S DREAM." — EPITAPH.

MR. EVERETT having, as we have seen, agreed to preach at the opening of a Wesleyan chapel newly erected in Sheffield Park, availed himself of Montgomery's invitation to the Mount, where he spent four days (Jan. 8—12.) in pleasant intercourse with the poet. He found him mostly engaged in reading "proofs" of the missionary work which, having occupied him during the preceding twelve months, was now rapidly advancing at the press. He was also, at intervals, reading Dante in the original, with reference to the brief

memoir which he had promised to write for Lardner's "Cyclopædia." Moore's "Life of Byron" was a fruitful theme of conversation; and Montgomery expressed his regret that Campbell, in his defence of the conduct of Lady Byron, should have adopted such an undignified tone of expression, because, however it might effect its object, it must inevitably lower the credit of a writer whose angry dispute with Brougham was equally to be regretted. But other trials and temptations were rapidly overtaking the bard of "Hope." Mr. Everett reminded Montgomery of a remark made by him several years previously, to the effect that Brougham was aiming at the Chancellorship. The poet said he still thought so; and he knew such was also the opinion of an intelligent friend who had been at school with Brougham. On whatever grounds this prediction was made, the original improbability of its fulfilment was already much lessened by the progress of events; though it could not have been foreseen at the present moment, even by the shrewdest politician, that a few more months would suffice to place the eloquent and aspiring lawyer on the woolsack, as Lord Brougham, at a crisis of transition in the legislative relations of the country, only inferior in importance to that which had accompanied the introduction of the Hanoverian dynasty to the British throne.

The conflict which was to result in Parliamentary Reform, and in reference to which Montgomery, in earlier life, had indulged those enthusiastic aspirations which were common with ardent politicians of his class, was now carried on with such bitterness of expression and such menace of consequences, by partisans on both sides, that the sensitive poet shrunk from the indulgence of hopes eagerly participated by most of his old co-patriots of stouter nerve, in prospect of an enlarged represent-

ation of the people in the House of Commons, in consequence of what he foresaw would be the immediate — not to say permanent — mischief of outrageous local excitement. The event, in the town of his own residence, too soon and too sadly justified his apprehensions. And there was at least another poet-politician who, notwithstanding he was an out-and-out Liberal, was not less evidently startled at the near approach of an apparition which he had assisted to evoke, viz. Thomas Moore, who thought the measure of Reform about to be obtained by his friends, “too much of a good thing.” Like many others at the time, he would rather it had been wrung from a Tory ministry than granted by the Whigs, who thus became the responsible as well as the accredited patriots.

Sheffield, in common with other places likely to be favoured with the new elective franchise, was not only the arena of public meetings and private debates relative to the progress of the Reform Bill, but popular passion was enlisted and inflamed by and on behalf of individuals intending to become candidates for the representation of the borough. Of these unquestionably the most popular was James Silk Buckingham, whose graceful elocution, long and persevering resistance to the trading monopoly of the East India Company, and liberal views in general, made him a favourite with most persons who did not either prefer a candidate with local claims, or who were opposed to the contemplated extension of the franchise on political grounds. It so happened that the “*Iris*” adopted the advocacy of Mr. Buckingham as a proper person to represent Sheffield in Parliament; while the “*Mercury*,” another newspaper, personally assailed him on the ground of that claim. The controversy was carried on with more than a sufficient amount of vehemence on both sides; and is

only mentioned here for the purpose of adding that, although Montgomery took no active part in the strife, he often shook his head when it was mentioned, or dropped a hint of pacific import between the combatants. But while he did not in the slightest degree countenance the electioneering project of Mr. Buckingham, he not only enjoyed the lectures of that gentleman as descriptive of his travels in the East, but dined with him once or twice at Mr. Blackwell's during "the height of that great argument" which so entirely divided and excited his townspeople.

On the 1st of March, Montgomery writes to inform Mr. Bennet that he had at length concluded his work, and sent the manuscript to Mr. Hankey. He regrets that he and his correspondent had been "so far asunder during the greater part of the progress of the book;" while the number and character of the letters, written with special reference to the securing of clearness and accuracy of detail, are evidence of the author's earnestness and labour. "I have," says he, "conscientiously done my best; the task has far exceeded, in time and toil, and sacrifice in other respects, all that I had calculated upon. I durst not have undertaken it had I anticipated what it has proved; but I am so far glad that *I did* undertake it, because I can say that I have not flinched from self-denial and suffering any more than from labour, to do my duty."\*

April 24. Montgomery asked Mr. Holland whether

\* As the revisal of the whole of the matter, as it first came from the pen of the author, was confided to the writer of this note, who also drew up the summary of contents as printed at the head of every chapter, he was continually struck with the evidence of elaborate carefulness afforded by the manuscript: indeed, the writing was frequently so much involved by alterations and interlineations as scarcely to be decipherable at all.

he had yet seen the wood anemone (*anem. nemorosa*, *Linn.*) this season? "Yes," replied he, "and with almost a boyish delight: indeed, while riding on the coach to London the other day, I preferred catching a glimpse of the silver-leaved wind-flower in the thickets, and by the road-side under the hedges, to the conversation of my fellow travellers." *Montgomery*: "And you were probably no loser." *Holland*: "At all events, I have an intense feeling of enjoyment in the evidences of reviving nature, in the early weeks of spring, of which I cannot divest myself." *Montgomery*: "Nor need you be anxious to do so: keep it as long as you can. I myself know how delightful it is to possess such a feeling; and it will probably fail you soon enough at the latest; besides, you may very easily lose a spring amidst your daily avocations. I have been so busily engaged in the South Seas of late, that I have hardly entered the fields or seen the flowers this season, yet I have the same fondness for them that I ever had even when I was most at liberty to enjoy them." \*

*James Montgomery to George Bennet.*

"Sheffield, March 21. 1831.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"I have a minute or two to thank you for your last letter of kind compliance with my request respecting the

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\* Such had been the effort of the mental labour and anxiety which attended the completion of this responsible literary task, that the poet found his brain seriously affected through the disorder of his stomach; and on walking out one day to breathe the fresh air, he felt so much impressed with the conviction that he might perhaps die suddenly in the field, that in a moment of morbid excitement he wrote his name upon a piece of paper with a pencil, in order that, should he be found dead, it might not be difficult to ascertain who he was!

title-page and Dedication of the *Missionary Journal*. Your name, as a matter of course,—to assign no better and higher reason, which assuredly I could, — *must* appear before mine at the foot of the Dedication.\* In answer to your inquiry respecting the probable time when I may be in London, — so far as I can foresee, and am permitted to hope, I think I shall be ready to commence my readings at the Royal Institution about the 7th of May. I have agreed with the Council of the London Institution also to deliver four Lectures at their Hall during my stay in the neighbourhood. It will be an object with me, if health be spared, and other circumstances in Providence permit, to begin as soon as I can be ready, that the season may not be too far advanced. I shall, in that case, be in town during the high religious anniversary season; but it is my purpose—and prudence compels me to adhere to it — not to take part in those delightful but exhausting enjoyments and labours.

“Truly your affectionate friend,

“J. MONTGOMERY.

“George Bennet, Esq., Hackney.”

On the 26th of April, Montgomery commenced the delivery of his Lectures on Poetry at the Royal Institution. From the fact that this was a second engagement to address one of the most respectable audiences in the kingdom, the poet no doubt derived the grateful conviction that his former readings had at least not been unsatisfactory: but besides this, a visit to London at this season afforded him once more the gratifying opportunity of attending the “May Meetings.” Nor was he in every instance a silent participator in these religious festivities. At the General Meeting of the

\* “To the Directors, Trustees, Treasurer, Secretaries, Subscribers, and Benefactors of the London Missionary Society:” but this was abandoned in favour of a Dedication to the King by the Directors themselves.



Religious Tract Society he was one of the speakers, prefacing his address by some pertinent observations on the advantages of early rising,—a virtue little exemplified by his practice at this time, but which at one period, co-operating with strong spiritual convictions of Christian duty, long influenced his own habits. He spoke at still greater length at the anniversary of the Sunday-School Union, on moving the resolution for the celebration of a jubilee in the course of the current year. Led by his friend Mr. Fincher, he also attended the annual meeting of the “Distressed Widows’ Society,” and took part in the proceedings. In allusion to the title-page of the Report, — “Society for the Relief of Distressed Widows, applying within the First Month of their Widowhood,” — he said, in substance, “I have not seen a page in any book, for a long time past, which has so affected my heart: the latter phrase, especially, touched me to the quick: it reminded me of another month connected with wedlock, which is usually deemed the happiest in human life — the honeymoon, proverbially a season of joy, hope, and overflowing of the affections. Here, however, the dark days that form the first month of widowhood come mournfully into contrast, when sorrow, and bereavement, and apprehension take hold upon her who is left desolate. Then this Society hastens to her relief, at the very time when temporal relief is most wanted; and having afforded that, while the heart is warm with gratitude, and the ear is open to the voice of the comforter, its visitors administer those consolations which the gospel alone can suggest and convey to the subdued and humbled sufferer.” He then paid a tribute of respect to the memory of Miss Fincher, whose recent death was recorded in the Report. She was, said he, “one who, though young in years, had soon and well completed

the work that was given her to do on earth, as a ministering visitor of the widows and fatherless of this Society,— welcome as an angel, wherever her footstep was heard, or a glimpse of her countenance seen. Though he had but little — and that very transient — acquaintance with her, in the summer of last year, the image which she had left in his eye, and the impression which the purity, simplicity, and loveliness of her character had made upon his heart, could never pass away while the memory of goodness might remain and be endeared to his best feelings.” \*

While in London he received an affecting letter from the widow of his old friend the Rev. Thomas Cotterill, who, describing herself as in prospect of an exchange of worlds, wished the poet to join two other gentlemen in the administration of her affairs. To this request he consented, as he had done in a previous instance.†

Mrs. Cotterill died in the autumn of this year, having previously made a “ deed of gift ” of what property she possessed to Montgomery and two other gentlemen, in trust, for the use of her children. That the poet faithfully discharged his duty in this affair will be taken for granted ; but it is important to mention that his religious intercourse with this good woman, who hailed the premonitions of her approaching mortality “ as truly joyful,” had a decidedly beneficial influence upon his own mind. Death, indeed, we believe he did not dread, in any cowardly sense of the term ; but of the sufferings which might precede and produce dissolution he had, we believe, a solemn apprehension lest his faith might fail him in the hour of nature’s final

\* Two years afterwards he indulged, in verse, “ A Recollection of Mary F.” [Fincher], *Works*, p. 337.

† *Antè*, Vol. IV. p. 36.

conflict, and the spirit sink through the infirmity of the flesh. Immediately after the death of Mrs. Cotterill he wrote to a friend: "I have seen little of sick beds, and almost nothing of death, with my eyes, though such scenes and sufferings, and that awful consummation of human life on earth, are daily in my mind. In this respect *I die* daily — would that it were to the Lord! and if it be not, it is because I do not live to Him as I ought. I saw Mrs. C. several times during her struggles with the last enemy: her faith — clear, simple, fervent, and fast-holding of the cross—showed me, more gloriously than ever I witnessed before, how the Christian *ought* to live, and how the Christian *can* die. I am humbled yet comforted at every remembrance of it."

A letter from Mr. Wilberforce to the poet, dated May 28., contained the following passage:—

"Since I had the pleasure of seeing you, an event has taken place which, with other gratifying associations, possesses that of affording me, I hope, the opportunity of cultivating your friendship more than has been possible while we have been so far separated from each other. The Lord Chancellor, with Lord Milton's kind co-operation, has gratuitously and kindly presented my son-in-law to the living of Rawmarsh, near Rotherham, and he and my daughter mean, D. V., to fix their residence there during the course of the present summer. I am told their house is larger than rather small livings commonly possess; and I therefore hope that when Mrs. Wilberforce and I pay them a visit, you will allow me to have the pleasure of introducing you to them as a guest. A complaint in my eyes, which causes me to write but very little compared with the claims on my pen, compels me to address you by another hand: *I take the pen into my own to assure you of the cordial esteem and attachment with which I am,*

"My dear Sir, very sincerely yours,  
"W. WILBERFORCE."

The Rev. John James took possession of his living in the ensuing summer; and, after long intervals of non-residence, vacated it altogether in 1844. We believe Montgomery once met Wilberforce at the parsonage; but as the rector of Rawmarsh was a very "high churchman," nothing beyond casual intercourse between him and the poet took place while they were neighbours.

On the 1st of June appeared in two handsome octavo volumes, comprising upwards of a thousand pages, the "Journal of Voyages and Travels by the Rev. Daniel Tyerman, and George Bennet, Esq., deputed from the London Missionary Society to visit their various Stations in the South Sea Islands, China, India, &c., between the Years 1821 and 1829. Compiled from original Documents by James Montgomery." The work was illustrated with portraits of both the gentlemen of the deputation \*, and about a dozen views of scenery engraved from sketches made by Mr. Tyerman.† In the preface the compiler thus alludes to the form and quality of the materials placed at his disposal: —

"The documents, official and private, from which these volumes have been composed, were of great bulk, and exceedingly multifarious. They consisted of a Journal kept by both members of the deputation, jointly during the first two

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\* That of Mr. Bennet, from a painting by Jackson which is at present in the Cutlers' Hall, Sheffield.

† Both by letter, and in conversation with the Directors in London, Montgomery insisted on the importance of at least "a map of the Pacific Ocean, and, if possible, smaller ones of the groups of the Society and Sandwich Islands, without which the work would be exceedingly defective, and nine out of ten readers scarcely be able to follow the deputation to and fro." The work appeared, however, without either map or chart; as did also the second edition, published several years later, though Montgomery's opinion was earnestly reiterated.

years of their travels, and a separate one by Mr. Tyerman, continued nearly to the day of his death. Mr. Bennet subsequently furnished several interesting narratives and other valuable contributions. These materials, however, were so extensive and miscellaneous, as well as so minute, that it became the duty of the compiler, instead of abridging or condensing the mass, to recompose the whole in such a form as should enable him to bring forth in succession, as they occurred to the travellers themselves, the most striking and curious facts relative to their personal adventures, or which came to their knowledge by the way."

Hence, as may be inferred from the foregoing statement, while the *facts* of the book rest entirely on the authority of the two gentlemen above named, the *tone*, *structure*, and, we will add, the *elegance* of the narrative belong to Montgomery.

In the preface are also noticed and disproved some egregious and prejudicial misstatements of the Russian voyager, Captain Kotzebue, who visited Tahiti while the deputation were there. Throughout the whole of the first, and the earlier chapters of the second volume of the work, the compiler has taken great care to preserve as many personal, national, and moral traits of character, traditions, fragments of history, and anecdotes, of the superstitions, forms of government, manners, customs, and practices of the South and North Pacific Islanders, as could be published without offence to decorum. "Nothing," as Montgomery justly remarks, "which has contributed to make a class of human beings either better or worse than otherwise they would have been, and at the same time different from all others of their fellow-creatures, can be insignificant or uninteresting." He adds, "A chapter would have been wanting in the history of our species, — or at best the contents of it, collected from other sources, would be exceedingly deficient, — if the authentic information



furnished by resident missionaries, and collected by the late deputation, were not *now* rescued from oblivion and put upon record in such publications as Mr. Ellis's 'Polynesian Researches' and the following Journal." Of course the "main burthen" of the book is in conformity with the object of all parties concerned—its missionary matter—its bearing on and illustration of one of the most remarkable and successful experiments recorded in the history of Christianity,—of the supplantation of the prejudices and practices of ancient forms of heathenism among whole communities of barbarians by the doctrines, morals, and the institutions of the New Testament, through a persevering preaching of the gospel by a few simple but earnest and devoted men.

A conviction that this work, full as it is of instructive and entertaining information, and bearing, as it does, on subjects of so much interest, has never been fairly appreciated, seems to call for a few words of explanation here. 1st. It had been immediately preceded in publication by the elaborate "Researches" of Mr. Ellis, mentioned above, and pertaining to the same field as well as the same period of observation. 2ndly. It had the disadvantage of being a compilation by one who had not himself witnessed what he describes. Hence, although we are quite sure, as we have already remarked, that the materials confided to Montgomery were turned to infinitely better account by him than they could have been had Mr. Tyerman himself lived to publish them, it is probable that had his name or that of the survivor, or both conjointly, appeared in the title-page of such a work as its authors, it might have been more popular. 3rdly. A want of cordiality (however originating and to be regretted) existed between the surviving member of the deputation and the directors of the Society which he had served at so much



sacrifice of pecuniary income, risk in personal perils, and persevering devotedness to the object of his mission. This, although not an obvious, was one decided cause why the book was less actively circulated than otherwise it might and ought to have been. But 4thly. It had a religious character ; and this, no doubt, deterred a large class of general readers from the purchase or perusal of a narrative which might otherwise have secured their favour by the pleasantness of its style, and the novelty of the subjects of which it treats.

The poet remained in London till the end of June, as appears by the date of the following inscription for John Bailey's cottage at Purcer's Cross : —

“ Peace be within these walls ; — and peace  
 Within the hearts of those that dwell  
 Or visit here, — with large increase  
 Of love, beyond what tongue can tell :  
 Joy too and Hope, heaven's antepast ;  
 What further ? — Heaven itself at last !

“ June 27. 1831.”

In 1831, the meeting of the British Association was held at York. On this occasion the members of the Sheffield Literary and Philosophical Society were anxious to delegate Montgomery as their representative to attend the meeting ; but he declined the honour, for the reasons which are playfully set forth in a letter to Miss Rowntree, who had invited him to become her father's guest during the anticipated visit.

“ Till your letter alluded to the subject, I had not heard of the intended swarming of philosophers from their various hives, metropolitan and provincial, at York, next month. Since then the officers of ours have been formally apprised of it, and our Society propose to depute one or two representatives. I have declined the honour of such an appointment,

principally because the proposed meeting is to be rather *Scientific* than *Literary*; and as I am no adept of the former class, though an enthusiast of the latter, it is not probable that I shall be tempted to attend as a volunteer. Your York Society is so purely rational, and addicted to matters of fact, that a being, like me, 'of imagination all compact,' would have little fellowship among its learned, industrious, and unweariable labourers in their geological, antiquarian, and other *uninteresting* (to use a lady's word) pursuits. I should absolutely become a petrification upon the bench among such cold and hard, and dry and dreary folks, — thinking, talking, and acting as if there were no such things as nerves in the world. Don't tell them that I hold them in such awe and reverence, because, by their benignity, I am an honorary though unprofitable member of their profound fraternity. I cannot help thinking, however, that if they were to diversify their abstruse exercises at the ensuing meeting with some of the pleasures of the imagination (the pleasures of the table — daily dinners — are the only relaxations yet announced, if I rightly understand their prospectus), it would be very acceptable to some of the younger philosophers, the bones of whose hearts are not yet set, and whose blood does not yet *run* — I mean *stand* — cold in their veins: and the evening meetings, in that case, might be enlivened with the presence of that sex which is not unworthy of their smiles, if cheeks like theirs are not past smiling. I have no room to explain; but, believe me, I mean everything respectful and laudatory of your public-spirited fellow-citizens and their expected peers and kinsfolk at the anniversary of science in September."

*James Montgomery to George Bennet.*

"Sheffield, Sept. 12. 1831.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

I was exceedingly glad to receive your letter of two dates (August 21. and 22.), because it relieves me from some anxiety which I began to feel in consequence of your long silence, and in which your other friends here, who frequently inquire concerning you, participated. It was peculiarly gratifying

to learn that you had been well employed in the best service from day to day, and from place to place, through a large and populous district, where your face, your voice, and your story would be new and welcome, and leave reminiscences of your visit in many a kind and Christian heart which would not willingly be forgotten. It was a disappointment, however, that your journey is to be extended through the present month, as we should have been most happy to have seen you among us on the Sunday School Jubilee day (the 14th) this week, which our people seem disposed to celebrate in a manner likely (I hope and pray) to be beneficial to the cause of Christian education on the Sabbath; and, if so, nationally, locally, personally, and eternally beneficial in the truest sense of that very comprehensive and therefore occasionally ambiguous term. However, you may be present at some similar festivity nearer the place where such institutions originated. I see that Wincanton is put down for that date; but I dare not forward this letter thither, in the forlorn hope of meeting you on that happy (may it be so to us as well as to myriads!) day, lest it should arrive too late, and hunt you from post-office to post-office, always a day's march in the rear, till the end of your tour, and then fall into the Dead Letter box at last, — from which it might, perhaps, experience a resurrection, and (as the custom is) be returned to the writer at Sheffield many days hence. I believe I may say all your friends here are pretty well: I sincerely hope that I am the worst in health, having been long plagued with an *inert* stomach which paralyses body and mind to a degree not painful but distressing to the latter, and irksome to the former. However, I must be content to feel myself 'waxing old like a garment,' since the heavens themselves must suffer such a change; and if I make it not the business of my few remaining days to seek for a clothing of immortality, even 'the fine linen, pure and white, which is the righteousness of saints,' the righteousness of those 'who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb,' I shall be indeed dumb with confusion in the day when the King comes in to see his guests, and

finds me without 'a wedding garment,' long as I have sat at his table and among his people here. . . .

"Your sincere and affectionate friend,

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"George Bennet, Esq., at Yeovil, Somersetshire."

The following frank and friendly letter from the venerable rector of St. George's Church, New York, whose visit to this country in the preceding year has been noticed, will be read with interest on both sides of the Atlantic.

*Rev. Dr. Milnor to James Montgomery.*

"New York, Sept. 20. 1831.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"I know not that the kindness which you manifested towards me while in Sheffield authorises my troubling you with a letter; but I thought I could not but avail myself of the opportunity of the return of a young friend to England, to say to you how much indebted I feel for your obliging attention to me while for a few days a sojourner in your town, and what a gratification it afforded me to know him personally by whose muse I had so often been delighted and improved. Shall I ever have that gratification repeated under my own roof? If you should find half the pleasure in a visit to America which I did from mine, short as it was, to England, it would repay you for all the inconveniences of the voyage.

"You will not wonder that my interest in your society and conversation was greatly increased by your kind feeling towards America, and the liberal, and at the same time very just, views which you entertain of the character and prospects of the growing republic.

"Our destinies are in the womb of time. What may be the results of the experiment at self-government here in apparently successful operation, God only knows. They will undoubtedly be grand in the production of evil or of good.

You will forgive a very natural — Heaven grant it may not be a mistaken ! — impression on my mind, that our anticipations ought to be of a favourable kind. It would be ingratitude to a gracious Providence, whose past favours towards us have been so signal, and who gives us our present almost unexampled prosperity, to question the benignant character of his future dealings with us as a nation.

“ But nations, as well as individuals, may forfeit the divine favour by sin, and many circumstances of a discouraging character cast an occasional cloud over the brightness of our prospects. There are two especially, that often check the hopes I would fain indulge, Infidelity and Slavery. . . . [After alluding to the operation and success of various religious institutions, the writer proceeds] :—Those of us who believe in revivals of religion, see also much to encourage the friends of Zion in the number which are constantly occurring, and in their vast and permanent results. After making every abatement for occasional instances of too much human contrivance in their origin and enthusiasm in their conduct, it appears to me that nothing but infidelity or inconsideration can cause a doubt of their being very generally the work of the Holy Spirit. Where numerous conversions occur during these seasons of special engagement, among young and old, rich and poor, educated and untaught, and their subjects are seen afterwards adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour by a holy life and conversation, how can we question that supernatural agency by which such results are produced? and what is there, in either the means or the end, that does not consist with God’s declared purposes of mercy to our apostate world? . . . In many of our seminaries of learning there have been extraordinary instances of individuals giving themselves to the Lord. . . . From these institutions there are constantly going forth religious teachers of youth, and candidates for the ministry, whose labours cannot fail, under the divine blessing, to advance the cause of Christ throughout the land.

“ I believe you saw my friend M’Ilvaine when he was at Sheffield. He has just been elevated to the episcopate of



the diocese of Ohio in room of Bishop Chase, who resigned lately his jurisdiction as bishop, and also his presidency of Kenyon College. In the new incumbent, should he accept the station, there is a union of talent, learning, zeal, and eloquence, that promises much for the interests of spiritual religion in our Western Church ; and he will have an able ally in the Rev. B. B. Smith, lately elected the first Bishop of Kentucky, but whose election, on account of informality in its conduct, will have to be repeated. The Rev. Mr. Ives, a son-in-law of the late Bishop Hobart, is just consecrated Bishop of North Carolina. He is a high churchman, but amiable, pious, and full of zeal. While you will not censure me for rejoicing in the improved character, as well as growing prosperity, of the church with which Providence has associated my own feelings and exertions, I profess unreservedly the same Catholic spirit towards all denominations of evangelical Christians which I know you have ever cultivated, and I rejoice in all the success with which the Lord is blessing their labours by the conversion of sinners to Himself. Let our only strife be who shall love God most, and serve Him best, and we shall not find it difficult to adhere to our denominational peculiarities, while we still maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

“ I adverted to the evils threatened by the hydra, Slavery, . . . the gradual abolition of which, as it has been accomplished in some States (in all north of Delaware), seems to be the only means of removing this monstrous blot from our national escutcheon. The Colonisation Society promises much : but difficulties of a powerful character have hitherto prevented the full co-operation of Government with its benevolent measures ; and its resources, wholly derived from individual contribution, are too limited for the accomplishment of its grand designs. . . .

“ We are observing with much anxiety the course of public events in Great Britain. The principal solicitude many of us feel, is in regard to the bearing of the projected measure of Reform on the moral and religious character and relations of your people. The consequences of its adoption or rejection we presume must be felt in these interesting

particulars, but how and to what extent you who are on the spot can better tell than we who are at so great a distance.

“I have reason to make many apologies for giving you the trouble of reading this hasty and crude epistle. It will be a most welcome retaliation to receive one from yourself of double its length.

“Be good enough to present my respectful remembrances to the Misses Gales ; and believe me to be, with great affection,

“Your obedient servant, Christian friend, and brother,

“JAMES MILNOR.

“James Montgomery, Esq., Sheffield, England.”

On the night of the 10th of August a dreadful hurricane destroyed the missionary settlements of the Moravian Brethren in Barbadoes, the residents barely escaping with their lives. In transmitting the published account of this visitation to a zealous friend of the missions, Montgomery says, “The printed portion of this sheet is the latest, and I must say the *saddest*, intelligence which we have received from our missions in the West Indies since their commencement, and they are now in their hundredth year. I send it not to urge you to do more ; but to show you how what you *have* done has been bestowed.” We have, in an early page of this work, adverted to such information as we could obtain concerning the burying-place of the Rev. John Montgomery in the island above mentioned : the following letter to the same correspondent contains an affecting allusion to the subject : —

*James Montgomery to Miss Rowntree.*

“Sheffield, Nov. 7. 1831.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,

“I inclose as many of the statements of our missionary visitation from the hurricane in the West Indies as I can spare. Barbadoes ought to be especially dear to me : it was



in that island my parents first preached liberty to the captive among the negroes ; and there, after laying my mother to rest in his *garden* in Tobago, my father laid down the burthen of mortality. Before the late devastation, in a retired inclosure (as all our Brethren's burying-grounds are, and where negroes and their teachers sleep together, waiting in hope for the resurrection of the just), the writer of the first letter in the inclosed papers [Brother John Taylor] mentioned some time ago that he had marked my father's grave, over which, with the earthy beds of several fellow-labourers in the same field, three beautiful tamarind trees waved their fine foliage and cast their cool shadows. According to accounts of the hurricane, scarcely a tree has been left standing throughout the island ; I therefore conclude that these must have been prostrated to rise no more for ever, — not so those that lay beneath their transitory covering : though thousands of years pass, and hundreds of tornadoes devastate the cane-fields, and tumble into ruins the dwellings and churches of Barbadoes, these shall again rise like the morning stars, and, at the new creation in the last day, sing together, while all the Sons of God shout for joy. You see that in this world the '*gourds*' even of *the dead* perish ! — Thank you for the consolations and hopes (prophetic, and which surely will be fulfilled in no small measure) which you, in the true spirit of Christianity, draw from the desolations and judgments — or rather chastisements, for hath not *He* done it, who in very faithfulness chastises whom He loveth?—which have befallen our poor missionaries and their flock. Of the latter, we may cherish the hope that the fold above has been augmented to the amount of the loss of this small sheep-cote in the wilderness ; and that this will ere long be replenished by many more of the lost being found, whom the Good Shepherd and his servants have been long seeking. I shall be very glad to welcome you to Sheffield at the time you mention, and should be much more so were it in my power to return your hospitality ; but believe me, very truly, your friend,

“ J. MONTGOMERY.

“ Miss E. Rowntree, York.”

Nov. 14. Montgomery called at the "Iris" office: Moore's "Life of Lord Edward Fitzgerald" was mentioned. *Holland*: "His lordship was a singular compound of sensibility, intrepidity, and folly: his letters to his mother form a strange contrast to his conduct as a political conspirator." *Montgomery*: "He was mad: to say nothing of his affiliation with the 'Bear Tribe' of Indians in North America, or the formal renunciation of his title in Paris, look at his hasty marriage with Pamela. To be sure, I was once mad enough on politics myself; aye, and over head and ears in love with this same Pamela too." *Blackwell*: "Why, how and when was that? did you ever see her?" "*Montgomery*: "When I was at school, by some means or other Madame de Genlis's 'Tales of the Castle' fell into my hands; in one of them she speaks in enthusiastic terms of the filial devotedness of the heroine Pamela, who, it is now well known, was her own natural daughter by the Duke of Orleans, and the same person who was afterwards married to Lord Fitzgerald. I was enraptured with the character of the damsel, as delineated in the story of 'Paméla, ou l'heureuse Adoption,'\* sighing with the anxious wish that I could connect the end of one tale with the beginning of another." *Holland*: "It is painful to trace the story of Lord Edward's life from its brilliant, glowing, and meritorious opening, through such strangely shifting scenes, to its erring, clouded, and tragical close." *Montgomery*: "But he has found a congenial and sympathising biographer, who often carries our feelings with him even on points where our judgment revolts." *Holland*: "As in the passage where, after contrasting, in fond and almost feminine description, his own connubial happiness with the

\* Les Veillées du Chateau, tom. iii.

ragings of that dark and troubled sea of conspiracy into which he was so recklessly plunging, he coolly charges his madness upon the Government!" *Montgomery*: "The name, if not the adventures, of Moore's hero was at one period thought to be connected with this neighbourhood. During the period of alarm which was created by the attitude of various political societies in Ireland soon after the outbreak of the French Revolution, there was found in lodgings at Attercliffe a stranger calling himself Barlow; but who he was or whence he came, nobody could tell. His manners were said to be those of a gentleman, and his intelligence so evidently superior to that of his apparent station that surmise was not slow to recognise in him, if not a fugitive rebel, at least some errant scion of nobility. He appeared, however, rather to shun than to court genteel society, while he constantly mixed with the common company in the public-houses of the village, talking very freely and fluently on current politics." *Holland*: "Did you ever see him?" *Montgomery*: "No; but Mr. Rhodes did; and was particularly struck by overhearing him, in some discourse about prison discipline, speak of '*Howard torturing the unhappy*;' and a strange phrase it might well appear as applied to the most philanthropic man living. This was at a house in Sheffield where a number of my political friends used to meet in those days. The stranger, however, never came into the parlour among the *dons*, but preferred the kitchen with the working men, who in those days talked politics as wisely as they do now, and *wiselier*," added he, with a waggish look, "for they were *better taught*!" meaning when *he* conducted the "*Iris*." *Holland*: "You will recollect that the neighbouring hamlet of Darnal had the equivocal reputation, about a century ago, of having afforded an asylum to the executioner of

King Charles the First, in the person of a man of the name of Walker; and it seems curious that the little rural chapelry of Attercliffe-cum-Darnal should be identified, even thus doubtfully, with two supposed republican fugitives!" *Montgomery*: "I believe Mr. Hunter doubts the identity of Walker with the masked headsman of the Commonwealth\*, as strongly as I do that of the mysterious Mr. Barlow with the husband of my 'Lady Pamela;' nevertheless, the stranger disappeared from Attercliffe as suddenly and mysteriously as he came; and after a time, it was currently rumoured that he belonged to the Irish family of Fitzgerald." †

*James Montgomery to James Everett.*

"Sheffield, Nov. 14. 1831.

"DEAR FRIEND,

"If I did not know you by your hand, I knew you by your dog, which generally accompanies you when you travel in the shape of a letter, and insures you a welcome by his 'sagacity, fidelity, and affection.' How that may be, I stay not to explain; but without him setting his seal to his master's paper-identity, I should have found it out before it was unfolded, and welcomed by anticipation whatever it brought of the best part of you,—your mind, your spirit, and your heart,—

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\* Mr. Hunter certainly repudiates the credibility of the tradition alluded to; but whether his doubt be sufficient to set aside any future review of the evidence, may be questioned.

† It appears to have been when public attention was drawn to Lord Edward Fitzgerald during the latest scenes of his life, that the notion alluded to in the text prevailed. The publication, however, of Moore's Memoir, renders it all but impossible to entertain such notion for a moment. It is true that between the 12th of March 1798, when he narrowly escaped seizure with his co-patriots, and the 19th of May, when he was so miserably disabled and captured by the soldiery, he was in disguise and concealment; but always, as the narrative shows, in or about Dublin.

of which you always infuse a sufficient portion into your letters to make them (whatever be their date or dimensions) long only in coming, and short in reading. In fact, I had thought that more than usual time had elapsed since I heard from you or of you in any way; and this remembrance was the more acceptable on that account.

“I thank you truly for your kind invitation : there is a hindrance in the way of my compliance with it, which you have naturally suspected, — *I am* pre-engaged to Mr. Wood, — a circumstance which I regret in one respect only, namely, that I cannot be in two places at once, under both the hospitable roofs which have offered me shelter, and double the man that I am to meet the good-will of my friends, on this occasion, as I have often experienced elsewhere and on similar visits among Christian people. These, even if I were fifty-fold, would not let the forty-ninth part of me lodge at an inn, nor the unit beyond lie in the street. This, which is so greatly to their honour, both gratifies and humbles me; and however flattering to the weaker part of a poor vain creature like me such kindness may be felt when I forget myself for a moment, it never tempts me to presume upon it or abuse the generosity that prompts it. Indeed I am almost as timid and trembling about going from home for a few days, and living in the circle where I am most cordially received, as though I were required to pass through a penance of morbid suffering, instead of privileged to enjoy society by which I ought to be made better, as well as healthier and happier, in proportion as my sojourn was prolonged, and my abstraction from cares, and crosses, and anxieties at home (principally of my own making and cherishing) is effected. But I am beginning to talk unintelligible things to one of your frank, cheerful, kindly, and social disposition, and I have no time for such stuff at present, writing as usual in haste, instead of doing something else more in arrear, but less urgent. I have heard of the name and fame of your last hero; but the volume has been flying in so many directions, it seems, and all the world running after it, that it is no wonder a copy has not fallen into my hands. You have, however, been well employed, and I am glad to hear that the



widow's heart has been made to sing for joy by it. Your own, no doubt, did the same many a time in the composition of it, and will do so again and again as often as you reflect upon the blessing which you yourself have been made by it not to her only, but to many a humble disciple of the Lord Jesus. The 'Hour's Conversation on Poetry' is admirable. I love Blackwood's love of poetry, — Christopher North's I should say, whoever that mysterious personage may be. His is the only periodical of the day (among the mob of such things that are trampling down all other literature) in which there is manifested anything like *enthusiasm* on that subject. He delights in it, and has generosity enough to praise without reserve, and to condemn with tenderness, wherever he discovers what he deems genuine poetic talent. But I must say no more. I think it is very probable that Professor Wilson — that Proteus of genius, who can take any shape in prose or verse — is the writer. Farewell.

“I am, very truly, your obliged friend,

“J. MONTGOMERY.”

Nov. 21. Montgomery went to Manchester to attend a Wesleyan Missionary Meeting, taking up his temporary abode, as before, with the Rev. R. Wood. Mr. Everett met him at the coach, and accompanied him to the platform. He appeared in good spirits, and spoke at considerable length, and, as his friends thought, in his happiest vein. He began with the solemnity and in the words of an Apostle: “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us all. Amen.” Adverting next, in general terms, to the love of God as exhibited to all mankind, and to the manner and extent of its operation through the agency of the Methodist missions, he said that, having been present at the meeting of the parent society in London, he was glad to meet the members of this fruitful branch of a flourishing tree of life, which,

planted beside that evangelical stream which flows so freely in this country, casts its grateful shadow over all lands, and is beautiful in the verdure of those immortal leaves which are "for the healing of the nations." In the course of his speech, he gave a graphic sketch of a small school in Ireland, situate in a wild locality among the mountains, called, with Hibernian significance, *The back o' the Sun*; and here, said he, was a school in a miserable hut, without either closing door or glazed window, and a mere aperture for the escape of the smoke like an Indian tent or a Hottentot kraal; yet in this miserable hovel there were forty ragged, dirty children learning to read, write, and cast accounts. Surely this characteristic scene at *the back of the sun* is typical of the state of Ireland generally, turning its back on the Sun of Righteousness which has been so long risen upon it. We have before us ample minutes of the entire speech; but it would be out of place to reproduce here that which, however striking and seasonable when first delivered, might appear less suited to the altered circumstances of the case after the lapse of so many years. Ireland, indeed, now, as then—and as we find was the case in still earlier times—continues to turn its back to the sun in almost every sense, but that which it cannot help,—the bright shining of the common luminary of heaven upon its beautiful verdure and its bountiful climate. But, on the other hand, how altered is China! The speaker in 1831 avowed his conviction that as surely as the "Great Wall" itself had not eventually sufficed to keep "outside barbarians" entirely aloof from intercourse with the "celestials," so the more formidable barrier of ancient superstition would not for ever be allowed to exclude the word of God from a people who should be made willing to receive it. And it is at least remarkable, that, at



the moment of transcribing this page (Nov. 1853), the dynasty of the Tartar is menaced by a formidable native insurrection, headed by a man avowing the principles of scriptural morality; while the Bible Society is simultaneously preparing to introduce, by this providential opening, a million copies of the New Testament, printed in the Chinese character, into that heretofore all but hermetically sealed country.

He remained in Manchester till the 25th, Mr. Everett seeing more or less of him every day; and occasionally making memoranda of the topics of conversation. The following are extracts:—

“Montgomery crossed the moors from Sheffield to Manchester by what is called the Glossop Road: he had never gone to Manchester that way before. He considered the scenery fine in general from its mere amplitude; while some of the higher hills were very striking objects, especially Kinderscout seen in the distance. But the season of the year was unfavourable for landscape effect,—dense fogs shrouding the mountains and choking the valleys, while patches of melting snow gave a dreariness to the view that was hardly compensated by the greater number and volume of temporary torrents.

“Looking from the window of my house situate on the rock overhanging the Irwell, he said, ‘Mr. Everett, you do not dwell on a Parnassus here; and if this be your Castalia which flows below, it is certainly both a turbid and a turbulent stream just now: but I suppose the scouring of the water-course by the present “fresh” must be very advantageous to a river constantly receiving so many impurities as the Irwell necessarily does in its progress through Manchester?’

“‘The country,’ said he, ‘appears at this moment to be threatened with three imminent perils,—*civil war*, of which the recent riots at Bristol may be but the beginning; the *ruin of trade* by the destruction of machinery, of which we have had some lamentable examples of late; and *the prevalence of pestilence*, in the form of Cholera, which is already so fast

and fatally spreading at Sunderland !' These views of things gave an air of sadness and solemnity to his conversation at this period.

"The subject of the Millennium being introduced, as it often was in his presence, Montgomery's opinion was asked. He said he had no opinion of his own to give, nor was he much wiser for the opinions of others, there being hardly any religious question on which so much had been written with so little certainty or satisfaction. After detailing the theories of Irving, and others, 'Perhaps,' he added, 'the most we can reasonably look for on this ground is a state of society in which piety will be generally predominant, at least as much so as impiety is at present.'

"He said Murray had applied to him while in London, through Sotheby, to allow the publication of all his lectures in a volume ; but that would have involved more labour of revision than he was disposed to undertake at the time ; while they had hardly, as yet, yielded him all the service they might do in their present shape. He was less anxious in this respect about the four which he had allowed Campbell to publish in the 'Metropolitan Magazine,' though he refused to part with the copyright of these.

"He was glad to find that the missionary work, upon which he had been so long and anxiously engaged, would not, at any rate, be a losing concern to the publishers. They printed 1500 copies, and more than half of these were subscribed for by the trade ; so that, at the worst, nobody would be ruined by the speculation.

"The general character of our current popular literature was semi-infidel : religious people complained of this ; but they had chiefly themselves to thank ; for lacking, as they too often did, either the taste or the disposition to patronise the higher and purer works of genius, it was hardly surprising that certain classes of writers should evince little respect for the feelings of those to whom they owed so little. It was sometimes amusing to see how cautiously certain periodicals spoke in favour of religious works, which they dare neither entirely overlook nor directly praise or condemn.

"I took him by railway across Chat Moss; it was his first experiment in steam-travelling: we went at the rate of about twenty-five miles an hour, twice the rate at which he had ordinarily gone by coach.\* He was much pleased with the trip, giving me, while we waited for the return train, a history of the publication of Pollok's 'Course of Time.' We concurred in opinion that it owed its great temporary success mainly to three things: 1. The comparative youth and sudden death of the author at the time the poem appeared from the press of Blackwood, and with the imprimatur of Professor Wilson; 2. A warm and complimentary critique in the 'Eclectic Review;' and, 3. Its religious character, contrasting strongly in this respect with so many of the popular poems of the day. I had the pleasure of gratifying Charles Swain, author of the 'Beauties of the Mind,' by introducing him to Montgomery.

"Temperance societies were mentioned: their aim, he said, was good, and they had produced a large amount of benefit as well in this country as in America. Of course he did not agree with many of the most zealous advocates of the cause in some of their extreme views; but, personally, his chief objection was to the *pledge*: it was liable to become a snare to the conscience either by substituting the law of a formal act for the conscientious observance of a moral duty, or to create temptations and occasions to confound positive sin with the real or possible breach of a self-imposed obligation. This, at least, was his feeling; but others, with equal sincerity, and perhaps more self-denial, might think and act very differently; and they had his good wishes and pecuniary aid, small as it was, for success.

"We dined one day at the house of Mr. Potter, solicitor, when the pending question of *immediate* or *gradual* abolition of slavery led to an animated conversation. Montgomery dwelt with earnestness on two remarkable facts illustrative of the changes that were taking place even in

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\* But only half the rate of travelling speed which he lived to realise.

Egypt, viz., that not only had the Pasha sent a couple of intelligent native youths to be educated in England, but he had allowed the publication of a journal of scientific and commercial intelligence in the city of Cairo.

“He alluded to the shabby conduct of the editors of some of the *Annals* who obtained from him articles in prose and verse on terms of compensation which they did not fulfil. He hoped he was as little likely to be actuated by mercenary motives in literary bargains as any man; but he liked honourable dealing at all times; and in these cases especially, as the parties had importuned him for contributions, and offered terms which he accepted, it was not very becoming in them to close an intercourse, which was wholly of their own seeking, by a breach of faith.

“The extravagances of the Irvingites being mentioned, Montgomery said that, of the three charges to which their leader had exposed himself, — viz. insanity, imposture, and fanaticism, — the last seemed to him the least improbable. What most struck him, was the subjection in which the Spirit appeared to be held by the preacher, who would only authorise its utterances at certain times! As to the matter spoken, it neither recalled the past, announced the future, nor revealed the unseen of any spiritual interest, beyond mere exclamations in scriptural or religious terms generally; and in this respect, though with a far different meaning and effect, the pseudo-prophets were often greatly surpassed by uneducated people in a Methodist love-feast, where fine bursts of natural oratory that seemed like inspiration were sometimes known to occur.”

He had been invited by Mrs. Arkwright to meet Campbell at Stoke Hall; but declined the visit, on this as on a former occasion, not so much, we suspect, in consequence of insuperable personal engagements at the time\*, as through an unwillingness to encounter

\* Campbell dates a letter from “Stoke Hall, near Bakewell,” Oct. 6. 1831, when he was busy with his “*Life of Mrs. Siddons*,” *Life*, vol. iii. p. 97.

the renewed importunities of the editor of the "Metropolitan Magazine" to aid him in that work; or to risk discussion or opinions on Moore's "Life of Byron," which had been reviewed in that periodical in a tone of such uncommon if not unjustifiable severity.

In the course of this year, the narrative poem entitled "Lord Falkland's Dream," \* founded on a remarkable passage in Clarendon's History, appeared in the "Metropolitan Magazine." It embodies some of the most cherished sentiments of the writer in deprecation of civil discord, not unseasonable at the moment when they were thus enunciated in rhyme; while, at the same time, it afforded him an opportunity of reiterating in the person of his hero his own life-long aspirations "Peace! peace! peace!" He likewise sent to one of the Juvenile Annuals twenty-four stanzas entitled "A Snake in the Grass, a Tale for Children." †

The following lines were written at the request of his old friend, Mr. Joseph Hunt, of Wath, for the gravestone of his wife, who was buried at the adjacent village of Bolton-on-Dearne : —

"When the last trump shall wake the dead,  
 And Christ be seen by every eye,  
 Saints shall with joy lift up the head,  
 For their redemption draweth nigh.  
 When heaven and earth are passed away,  
 And time and death shall be no more,  
 The righteous, in eternal day,  
 Their God and Saviour shall adore :  
 Thrice happy they, who thus shall meet  
 The friends they loved around his feet !      J. M.

"1831."

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\* Works, p. 202.

† Ibid. p. 218.

## CHAP. LXIX.

1832.

JOURNEY TO BATH. — LETTER TO GEORGE BENNET. — DISAPPOINTMENT OF OUR HOPES OFTEN SALUTARY. — AMERICAN COLONISATION SOCIETY. — INSURRECTION OF NEGROES IN JAMAICA. — MORAVIAN MISSIONARIES CHARGED WITH SLAVEHOLDING. — LETTER TO JAMES EVERETT. — FRAGMENT OF H. K. WHITE. — CERTIFICATE OF CONNECTION WITH THE AMERICAN BOARD OF MISSIONS. — PASSING OF THE REFORM BILL. — MR. HOLLAND'S SOJOURN AT NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE. — CONVERSATION. — LETTER FROM EBENEZER ELLIOTT. — LETTER TO MISS ROWNTREE — TO GEORGE BENNET. — THE CHOLERA AT SHEFFIELD. — MONTGOMERY'S ACTIVITY DURING ITS PREVALENCE. — LETTERS : TO JOHN HOLLAND — TO MISS ROWNTREE. — HER MARRIAGE, DEATH, AND CHARACTER. — THANKSGIVING DAY ON THE CESSATION OF THE CHOLERA. — FIRST ELECTION OF MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT FOR SHEFFIELD. — RIOTING AND LOSS OF LIFE.

THE present year, if less productive than might have been expected of notable incidents in the life of Montgomery, was, nevertheless, an eventful one, and especially so as concerned the town in which he resided: the excitement connected with the progress and passing of the Reform Bill in the earlier, and the visitation and ravages of the cholera in the latter, months of 1832, were long remembered by the inhabitants. In the former case, although the triumph of a principle which the poet had himself once so zealously and satisfactorily advocated, he dared not openly rejoice with the crowd, in consequence of what he foresaw and predicted but too truly, — the display of party strife, and the resulting evils of the first general election. His sensibility recoiled from contact with the coarseness and reckless-



ness of political conflict, even in prospect ; but when the pestilence came and struck terror into many stouter hearts, he at once took his place in the van of those who prepared to meet and mitigate its horrors by organising and co-operating with specific religious and medical agencies. Writing to a friend in the first week of January, the poet says, “I am so circumstanced with respect to my friend Mr. Rowland Hodgson, that I feel it my duty to accompany him on a journey to Bath, on which we propose to start on Tuesday next ; and, on account of his infirmity, mean to take four or five days on the road. He has just now entirely lost his sight ; and though for several years the light has been withdrawing from his eyes, the extinction of the last spark seemed to afflict him more than all the previous privation and apprehension.” As in the case of blind persons generally, the sense of hearing became doubly dear to the good man ; and as he had a pleasing utterance, and a heart and mind overflowing with religious truth, he was by no means shut out from either public or private intercourse with his fellow Christians : hence he and his companion attended several Bible Society meetings during their absence from Sheffield. The following is an extract from a letter addressed to Mr. Bennet from Bath, February 16. : —

“I thank you for the amusing variety of newspapers, &c. which you inclosed—all different kinds of mirrors reflecting the aspect of the times [in relation to the question of Parliamentary Reform], in as many different ways, as to shape, colour, expression, &c., according to the caprice of those who fashion such things. The real aspect of the times grows more and more *ominous*, to use a heathen word ; more and more solemn and charged with warning, in Christian parlance. O may we be able to look at it ‘as seeing Him who is invisible,’ and thus be prepared for whatever it



foretells, or whatever may befall, which indeed is more than the wisest observer of 'the signs,' concerning which so much is now said, can guess ; clearly as the *foretelling* may be *ascertained* when the *issue* has arrived. 'God moves in a mysterious way : ' let us stand still that we may see his salvation, or move at his signal,— to use your favourite (and approved from experience) figure, — as the pillar or the cloud, by day or by night, leads on. . . . I have been much occupied in my parlour alone, with preparing Dante and Ariosto for Dr. Lardner: the manuscripts of both have been sent to him."

On the homeward journey of the two friends, on the following day, the poet was delighted on the way to Stroud with the singing of the first skylark he had heard this year: he apostrophised the bird in some verses "addressed to a Friend."\* During this tour he witnessed a rural operation which he thus pleasantly describes in a letter written some months later : —

*James Montgomery to George Bennet.*

"Sheffield, June 16. 1832.

"In the month of February last, on our return from Bath, as my friend Mr. Rowland Hodgson and myself were travelling between Gloucester and Tewksbury, I observed, from my side of the carriage, a field which had been recently ploughed, and apparently harrowed, — for the surface lay not in furrows ; but upon it were several women and girls in rows one behind another, laterally, as though they were engaged in parallel lines, but did not keep pace with each other in their work. What the work was I could not guess : it was evidently not weeding, for the ground was perfectly clear and fresh turned up. It seemed to be planting, — all stooping down, and appearing to put something into the earth, but they were too far off for me to distinguish what. I therefore described the scene, and their mode of action, to

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\* Works, p. 334.

my friend, who, being blind, could not help out the imperfection of my eyes by the aid of his. He immediately replied, 'I dare say it is *dibbling*, a mode of husbandry by which two thirds of the grain necessary in the ordinary way of sowing an acre is saved: holes are pricked in lines along the field, and into each of these two or three grains of corn are dropped.' 'I have often heard of drilling or dibbling, but never saw either before,' I exclaimed; 'and I must say that if this be the latter, dibbling is quite in character with everything else in an age of political economy. A clever schoolboy, in this way, might easily calculate how many grains of wheat would be required to sow a farm of fifty acres! But for my part, give me *broadcast* sowing, — scattering the seed on the right hand and on the left, in liberal handfuls: this dibbling is very unpoetical and unpicturesque; there is neither grace of motion nor attitude in it!' I checked this impertinent sally, however, and added: 'Dibbling is a good thing for all that. I am glad that so much corn is saved, to be made into bread for the poor women and their children, and that they themselves get employment and wages by this plan, which must be all clear gain to them. Nevertheless, dibbling *is* unpicturesque and unpoetical; therefore, give me broadcast sowing!' I fell immediately into a musing fit, and moralised most magnificently upon all kinds of husbandry (though I knew little or nothing of any, — but so much the better perhaps for my purpose), making out that each was excellent in its way, and best in its place, — in the field of the world, the dibbling of Sunday School teaching, here a little and there a little, being as useful in its way as the drill system of the Bible and Religious Tract distributors, and the broadcast sowing of the preached Gospel. Continually, however, I felt the exclamation at my tongue end, though I kept it there, 'Give me broadcast sowing!' By degrees my thoughts *subsided* into verse, and I found them running lines like furrows along the field of my imagination; and in the course of the two next stages they had already assumed the form of the following stanzas, which I wrote down as

soon as we reached Bromsgrove. This is the whole 'history and mystery' of which I fear you have heard so romantic an account,—'Sow in the morn thy seed,' &c."\*

The poet's absence on his visit to Bath having disappointed one of his warm-hearted friends of the anticipated pleasure of meeting him in another quarter, he wrote a long letter of explanation, from which we copy the following important passage:—

"Forgive me for what I could not help in this case: but be assured that we seldom lament, after the first bitterness is past, disappointments of that kind. Indeed I do not remember a single instance, in my whole personal experience, when what I have longed for till I hoped, and hoped till I expected it, has been withheld from me, that I have afterwards continued to regret having missed it with a degree of anguish that has so affected my happiness as to make me imagine that I should have been happier if it had been ordered otherwise. And I do not refer to little crosses, like that which it seems, to my sorrow, I caused you to take up, — for remember that you *did* take it up — it was not laid upon you, — but I allude to some exceedingly great and bitter disappointments of my hopes and schemes in former life, of which though they have left a burthen and a gloom that have never ceased to make the remainder of my way more or less dreary, yet I dare not say at this hour, much as I lament many things which I have *done*, that I wish anything that I have *suffered* in the course of providence, and which has not befallen me from my own fault, had not happened. Miserable I may have been made by such events as we usually call *misfortunes*; but that I should have been less so, if they had not been permitted to remind me that here is not my rest, I dare not even suppose, much less assert. I have actually lived long enough to see that some of the most afflictive of these were the means of preserving me from far greater evils. I see wisdom, and

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\* Original Hymns, CCLV.

goodness, and mercy, guarding and guiding me, and overruling for my good, things which almost broke my heart when they came upon me, and seemed at the moment to cut off hope altogether.”

Should any reader pretend to see nothing more in the foregoing confession than the reverie of a sentimental optimist, such a one must know little of an important Scripture doctrine, and still less of the deceitfulness of his own heart.

On the 5th of March, Mr. Elliott Cresson, an accredited agent of the “American Colonisation Society,” again visited Sheffield for the purpose of giving information relative to the formation and progress of the free negro colony of Liberia in Western Africa. His mission was looked upon with mistrust, and he was not welcomed with entire cordiality by many zealous emancipationists, who regarded the scheme, at best, rather as a safety-valve designed to let off a certain quantity of danger to the slave states, and thus more safely postpone the granting of freedom to the blacks, than as having exclusively in view their moral well-being and personal rights. Whatever foundation there might seem to be, at the moment, for such a surmise, the event, so far as the success of the colony is concerned, has more than justified the experiment.\* In proposing

\* It is indisputable that the “American Colonisation Society” originated with a number of individuals whose object was purely philanthropic. This was in 1816. At the moment of recording the occurrence of the public meeting mentioned in the text, there appears in “Chambers’s Repository” an interesting tract entitled “Liberia,” and detailing the history of the colony from its commencement to the date of this record (1853). After adverting to the past and probable effects of the experiment on the negroes of Africa and America, the writer concludes with the assertion “that the founding of the colony of Liberia is likely to be ranked hereafter among the greatest historical events of our age.”

that the vicar of Sheffield should take the chair at a public meeting which had been convened, Montgomery remarked, that when he first came to the town about forty years ago, he found the attention of parties divided between parliamentary reform and the abolition of the slave trade, and at this moment the two great topics of discussion were nearly the same in terms, though substantively both causes had greatly advanced. . . . In past years, he added, we had witnessed argument and fancy employed against the trade in human beings, but in neither was that predicated which had now come to pass,—the employment of ships to carry back from slavery, not the negroes to their father-land,—for the present race of American slaves had been born in bondage,—but to their grandfather-land the children of negroes that had been enslaved so long ago; to carry them back not only to Africa, but to the very coast of that country whence formerly the largest shipments of cargoes of human beings had been made! A few days afterwards the advocates and the opponents of slavery in this country were alike startled by the arrival of intelligence of an insurrection of the blacks having broken out in Jamaica.

“ The accounts from the West Indies,” says Montgomery in a letter to a friend, “ especially from Jamaica, that Pandemonium of slavery, are very alarming. One of our settlements, I fear, has suffered damage, the estate on which it was situated having been desolated by the insurgents. The *enemies* of missions—the enemies of the gospel, indeed—will have much to answer for in this dreadful business; and I fear the over-zealous among the anti-slavery class have been indirectly to blame. I am, however, not the judge of either, not knowing more than the newspapers tell, and they tell more than they know! But I am sure that Christ’s true missionaries, of whatever denomination they be, are the



best friends of the negroes after all. Was such a thing ever [before] heard of since the foundation of the world, as a rebellion — a rebellion of slaves, in which, though frightful was the devastation of property, not a drop of blood was shed of those who were deemed the oppressors? The planters and their drivers owe to the missionaries, whom they calumniate most foully, their lives. The gospel has taught the infuriated negro to spare his master, — but the master has not learned from it to spare the negro.”

But an occurrence was at hand identified in some measure with the feelings and opinions excited by the fearful outbreak at Jamaica, which more nearly concerned the writer of the foregoing remarks; — a Baptist minister, at this feverish crisis, startled the religious public by announcing that the Moravian missionaries, those “followers of the compassionate Saviour,” were “Slaveholders!” To the members of the Brethren’s Unity in England generally, including at least some of their bishops and other officials, this intelligence was astounding: to Montgomery it was a “thunder-stroke; especially as it was soon afterwards followed by some explanatory remarks by Mr. P. Latrobe, the secretary of the Moravian missions, who acknowledged that in some of the colonial stations there were slaves which were considered the property of the Brethren, and were employed in domestic service.” Thus he wrote immediately to one of the most active and persevering friends of the Brethren’s missions, adding, “*You now know as much as I do on the subject.* I shall, of course, endeavour to learn the worst that can be charged against us in this case.” He then declares that, grateful as he had been for the past liberal contributions of his correspondent while the Brethren were considered innocent in this matter, he does not consider the party bound either to contribute or solicit further contributions under the

altered circumstances of the case. This matter did not rest here.

*James Montgomery to James Everett.*

“Sheffield, March 17. 1832.

“DEAR FRIEND,

“Can it be nearly four months since we parted at Manchester? Your note, accompanying Mrs. Everett’s album, dated *November* 24. 1831, says that it is; and as it told the truth then, it must do so now, change of time and place only confirming its accusatory evidence against me for my master-sin (towards my fellow creatures), procrastination. It is, however, only four weeks this very day, since I caught an idea in the shape of a lark, which I was able to keep till I had safely caged it in Mrs. E.’s aviary, where birds of all feathers, from the wren to the eagle, are welcome to flock and perch together,—but where singing-birds, I know, are peculiarly acceptable, especially to him whom she wishes to please rather than herself in thus collecting them. It was between Petty France (a country inn where my friend Mr. Rowland Hodgson and I had lodged, being our first stage from Bath), and Rodborough, near Stroud, in Gloucestershire, on an open champaign of great extent, with scarcely a tree to be seen, after one of the sharpest nights that we have experienced during this mild winter, I thought I heard, but could scarcely believe my ears, a lark singing among the morning clouds that were melting away and leaving the sun in sole possession of the heavens, while the frost still lay white upon the ground, and in ice-pools on the high road. When I had assured myself, amidst the ringing of wheels and clattering of hoofs, that I was not mistaken in my songster, I fell into a fit of musing; and because I was too indolent to prevent them, I let my thoughts do what they pleased with themselves and me, as they seemed much disposed to play at poetry, though, from being sadly out of practice, they were very awkward at the game. However, I send you the result. In truth these albums—now I have done with Mrs. E.’s—are very trou-



blesome things, especially (as I was bound in honour and gratitude in this case to do) when one is obliged to fill up a page with something that is not in existence at the time the book is presented to you for your *voluntary* contribution. I had previously, at twice as many times, tried twenty subjects, or rather beat the bushes for subjects, and either found none, or when I did start them they stole so quietly away, that they had disappeared before I could say that I had well seen them; or after following them full cry — literally in Mr. Hodgson's carriage — as many miles as would constitute a good fox-chase, they distanced me at last. I was almost in despair when the notes of the lark so early in the year, and on so keen but beautiful a morning, cheered me, and I thought, could I but translate them, what a pretty novel *tiralira* madrigal would they make for Mrs. E.'s album! And so, as I did not understand the language of birds, and could not tell what the lark was *singing about*, — yes, I could, for I was sure it was about love, and in exuberance of joy, — I contented myself with something *about his singing*. Soon after my return from Manchester, unluckily for my peace of mind, which was sufficiently disturbed at the thought of having to write in Mrs. E.'s, came another album, a new-born baby's, from Mr. Newstead, with such a letter of solicitation to contribute an opening page, that I had no alternative but to frame some original lines for that also, or else be so hard-hearted as none but a bachelor of threescore could be, and certainly as no parent, after the birth of a first child, could comprehend possible. Well then, with these two little things to torment me, and many sufficiently grave ones to trouble me more deeply, but not half so anxiously, in the second week of January I agreed to accompany my friend Mr. R. Hodgson to Bath, he having recently lost his sight, — which had long been going — altogether, and being otherwise very infirm and unwell. We were eight days on the road each way, and stayed nearly five weeks in that city, from which he returned no better, and I no worse, on the whole, in health. Having thus accounted, so far as you are concerned, for the occupation of my time since I

have had Mrs. E.'s album in custody, I have only to add that I return it with far more pleasure than I received it, though I had all the good will in the world to serve her in the best manner I could : but I shall be doubly gratified to learn in due time, that as she would not accept the will for the deed before, she will now accept the deed for the will, though I frankly acknowledge the exchange is for the worse ; however, if she likes it better, I won't quarrel with her taste. Will you, at your convenience, transmit the inclosed parcel, containing the other album, to the Rev. Robert Newstead, charging him with half the expense of carriage? Immediately on my return from Manchester, I read with great delight the Memoir of Sammy Hick, and if I did not profit, and do not continue to profit by it so long as I live, the blame and loss will be my own. After making allowance for all *your* quaintnesses, — which when I like them least still *so* remind me of yourself as to disarm all petulance from fastidious taste, — I must say, in justice both to the author and the hero, that few works of the kind that have fallen in my way have either entertained or instructed me more. The living illustration of the power of the simplest and sublimest *principle* in religion — faith, and the admirable exemplification of the utility and blessedness of the plainest but most necessary practice enjoined by Christianity — prayer, would put to the blush the wisdom of this world, if the world could understand what faith and prayer mean without experiencing the one and employing the other, — the first as the highest exercise of reason, and the last as the noblest privilege of man — a dignity which God alone can confer, when He admits to audience the worm into which He has put the soul of a seraph. Often, often, thought I, in reading S. H.'s clear, conscience-searching, and heart-humbling yet heart-expanding sentiments, how much better instructed is the poor half-witted peasant who is taught of God than was Socrates in all his glory !

“ I am, very truly, your obliged friend,

“ J. MONTGOMERY.

“ Mr. James Everett, Manchester.”

We transcribe the following trifle from a copy attested by Montgomery as "a genuine unpublished fragment of the late Henry Kirke White :"—

"I have a wish — 't is near my heart,  
Concealed from all but me ;  
To keep it there's a foolish part,  
For oh ! it must not be :  
It must not, must not be.

"Why, my fond heart, why beat'st thou so ?  
The dream is fair to see —  
But bid the lovely flatterer go ;  
It must not, must not be ;  
Oh ! no, it must not be.

"'T is well this tear in secret falls,  
This weakness suits not me ;  
I know where sterner duty calls ;  
It must not, cannot be ;  
Oh ! no, it cannot be."

On the 24th of May the poet returned to Sheffield from Bristol, where he had been attending religious meetings. An album was immediately put into his hand from a lady in London, who had long been an admirer of his poetry, and, although now on her death-bed, could not repress an intense desire to see his handwriting in her book. He was affected by her appeal, and inscribed the lines beginning "I cannot call affliction sweet." \*

A few evenings afterwards, when Mr. Holland was sitting with him in the Hartshead, a parcel was brought in, which, on being opened, appeared at first only to contain tracts published by the American Temperance Society. Amongst these, however, was the Twenty-second Annual Report of the American Board

\* Original Hymns, CLXXXII.

of Commissioners for Foreign Missions; and within it, a neatly engraved document to the following effect: — “This is to certify, that James Montgomery, Esq., of Sheffield, England, by a donation from Henry Hill, Esq., is constituted an honorary member of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. Boston, Mass., January 23. 1832. WILLIAM REED.”\* Of the gentleman who had for such a purpose generously subscribed one hundred dollars, Montgomery had never before heard even by name. He immediately, however, addressed a polite letter of acknowledgment to his American sponsor, accompanying it with what he thought would be a suitable return, — a copy of the “World before the Flood,” and his “Memoir of Brainerd.”

On Thursday, June 7th, the Royal assent was given to the Reform Bill. Montgomery received the news with apparently suppressed emotion; he enunciated no congratulations in verse. Far otherwise his poetical compatriot Ebenezer Elliott, who promptly seasoned with some of his most pungent “rhymes” the popular demonstrations of local triumph; at once celebrating the recent “Deed of Brougham, Russell, Grey,” and evoking the memories of Muir, Palmer, and Gerald! Not only so, but he immediately collected his “Corn-Law Rhymes” into a volume, with a leading poem of great merit, entitled the “Splendid Village,” and a characteristic dedication to William the Fourth, submitting the manuscript to Montgomery, who made some alterations and suggestions. “I thank you,” said the poet, in return,

\* This compliment seems to have been rendered conformably with the following Resolution of the Board, Sept. 19. 1821, — “That any clergyman, on paying \$50, and any layman on paying \$100 at any one time, shall have the privilege of attending the Meeting of the Board, and of assisting in its deliberations, as an honorary member, &c.”

“ for your corrections; they are capital. The dedication will now do, simply and well, what I wished it to do;—it will thank the King for his Reform Bill. I have long felt the propriety of all you say about Greek, Latin, and hard words; yet when I meet with a fine outlandish word, I cannot reject it without an effort. This is owing, in part, to a secret envy of learning and learned men which will be found at the bottom of my heart; but that is not all: I suspect there is something in the sound and appearance of classical words which commends them. Is it not really better to say, ‘ sounds melodious and discordant, yet harmonious,’ than to say, ‘ sweet and harsh, yet agreeing sounds?’ ” Of course it was not the use of such terms as these that suggested the friendly hint of the experienced critic.

Having overpassed this momentous period of political struggle, and chronicled its crowning act, the writer of this paragraph laid down *his* pen as editor of the “ Iris,” closing behind him the door, which to Montgomery was never again opened. At midsummer he went to Newcastle-upon-Tyne, whence, after a sojourn of six months, he returned to Sheffield, occupying thenceforward a room at the Music Hall; his most pleasing associations with which are the fact that, at least once a-week, sometimes oftener, Montgomery, as long as he lived, did “ knock at *that* door;” and the recollection how many of the incidents and opinions recorded in these pages were derived from conversations with his revered friend in those ever-delightful and never-to-be-forgotten interviews.

June 20. Mr. Everett and Mr. Holland took supper with Montgomery. Mr. Holland said he was going for a few months, with his friend Mr. Blackwell, to Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and should be found no longer at the “ Iris ” office. Montgomery replied, he was sorry



for it, as there would not then be a door in Sheffield at which he could enter without knocking, nor any place where he felt free at all times to come for a little gossip. "I must now," added he, "shrink again into my shell; and into the further corner of it." His recent visit to the western counties being mentioned, he jocosely remarked that there was generally one lion in every company, and usually also some individuals, who lashed him into fury: he was himself compelled to play the lion in a large party at Shrewsbury; Mr. Gawtress acting as his keeper, putting his head into his mouth, stirring him up with questions; and making him roar so famously, that when he got to Bristol he found he had nearly lost his voice altogether. He said Peter Jones, the converted American Indian, whom he had met on the missionary platform, had almost the finest voice he ever heard; it appeared to come from his throat without effort, full, pure, and round, like the tones of a flute. Some passage from "Childe Harold" being quoted, Montgomery said the fourth canto of that poem was not only in the author's best style, but was itself worth all the money that had been paid for all his poetry. In answer to a remark about the difficulty of translating many of the stanzas in that poem, he said: — "Byron, after all, was the greatest genius of his day in poetry. He has apparently produced the largest deposit, and the most permanent effect, in the universal mind, and upon the taste of the public, and of writers after him. He is untranslatable, because his thoughts and his diction are so amalgamated, so essential to each other, that they cannot be decomposed, — analysed into separate elements. The thoughts refuse to be bound within the circle of any language but his own, his mother-tongue; so do the thoughts, in a high degree, of almost every



original poet." He was reading Moore's "Life of Lord Byron" with deep interest, as might be expected.

We have mentioned Ebenezer Elliott, than whom a truer poet did not breathe the air or enjoy the sunshine among the masses of fermenting intellect in England at this period: but a tone of political bitterness, in the occasional use of the coarsest terms of party vituperation, too often tended to mar the beauty of compositions otherwise rarely surpassed for their truth, for their power, or their tenderness, by the strains of his most richly-gifted contemporaries. Utterly dissimilar in nearly everything but genius, the two celebrated Sheffield poets had but little personal intercourse; yet no one more justly appreciated, or more generously applauded, the really unobjectionable effusions of the "Corn-Law Rhymer," than Montgomery; and this kindly feeling was at least reciprocal. The following letter affords a characteristic glimpse of our old friend in a genial mood: —

*Ebenezer Elliott to James Montgomery.*

"Sheffield, June 13. 1832.

"DEAR SIR,

"I thank you for the loan of Jane Taylor's poems. Her 'Ranter' and mine are certainly much alike in many respects, but I never saw the book, or heard of it, till you lent it to me a few days ago. The Ranter whom I originally proposed to draw, is Mr. Blytheman\*, now a preacher among the Primitive Methodists: he has all the simplicity and single-heartedness required; but I could not make poetry of him. The ideal was wanting, as I think it is in Jane Taylor's

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\* The good man here named is long since dead: but we well remember him — formal, solid, and logical — as a preacher. We never heard less of *rant* in the pulpit than in the sermons of this "Ranter."

preacher, so I was obliged to imagine a character; and happening to think of my own 'Miles Gordon' in the 'Village Patriarch,' I succeeded, with the aid of a cheque upon the bank that never fails, in making a character out of both. As a surface poet, in clearness of style, and correct and minute observation, Jane Taylor has few if any superiors. I met with her long ago in two little volumes of 'Poems for Infant Minds, by several Young Persons;' and I beg leave to say, that the fine volume which I now return to you is not worthy to be so well thumbed as those are. Jane Taylor's religion seems cold and forced. I like her sister's poetry, on the whole, better than hers. But if it is not too late to think of matrimony, I recommend both sisters to your consideration. Jane would make you a capital marketer; and the butcher would send her a present of moor-game now and then *to keep thick*, as we say in Yorkshire: but her sister would nurse you in sickness; weep over your grave, and lie down in it at your side a chaste widow; — perhaps I am quite mistaken.\*

"I am, dear sir, yours very truly,

"EBENEZER ELLIOTT.

"James Montgomery, Esq."

On the subject of Slavery, and its existence at some of the Moravian missionary stations in the West Indies, his mind continued to be sadly harassed and perplexed for such was the state of the case that he found it almost as impossible to blame as to justify his brethren. At length, writing to a friend on the 9th of May, he says:—"In the British West Indies, over which alone we in England have immediate though not absolute missionary control, the evil will be put down altogether

\* Mistaken indeed, in reference to the last-named lady, who had at this time been for several years the happy wife of the Rev. Joseph Gilbert. Montgomery, however, received in good part the free and easy speculation, *ad hominem*, of his poetical fellow-townsmen.

as soon as possible, by full authority of our German Conference. The slaves are few at different stations in four islands,—I believe about thirty in all, of whom several are old and almost past work; and many of them young, who have never been set to work.” He recurs to the painful topic in the following letter.

*James Montgomery to Miss Rowntree.*

“Sheffield, July 23. 1832.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,

“. . . I thank you for your kind intimation of undiscouraged attachment to our missions among the heathen, notwithstanding those appearances which are against us, and those realities of insufficiency and demerit which ought to humble us in the dust before our fellow-Christians, who may not have been tempted as we have been, or who have better stood their ground. But though Satan hath desired to have us that he may sift us as wheat, yet we know *who* hath prayed for us that our faith fail not,—even He who cannot pray in vain. Poorer than our fathers were a hundred years ago, when they began the work, we cannot be if all the Christian world desert us, and throw us upon our own resources. If but the spirit which moved them to forsake all, that they might carry the knowledge of Christ to the Gentiles, be continued to us their children, we shall never want means to carry on that part of the labour in his vineyard which He has appointed to us. On the 21st of next month it will be a century since the two first devoted disciples set out for the West Indies, with *three dollars* in their pockets for travelling expenses; and we will take our scrip and staff and follow them as soon as it shall be the will of God thus to honour us. We have lately had at Sheffield an *Anti-Slavery* missionary, from the London Society of that name,—a Mr. George Thompson, a Boanerges of a speaker, who by his fervid eloquence, at a time of peculiar excitement, when the very atmosphere of our town was charged with electioneering electricity, raised such commotion among our

torpid townspeople on the subject of immediate and total abolition, that an association for accomplishing that stupendous desideratum was formed during his stay ; and I, though chairman of the meeting, was left far behind by almost everybody else while the fever lasted. With all my soul I wish them well, — they mean well, I know, — and so far as I can honestly help them I will ; but I cannot consent to bind my conscience with some of their dogmas which I will not repeat here, because they always make me angry with the good men that hold them, — or rather, are held by them, — and who, whenever we get into argument, are angry with me because I don't see what is *invisible* as they see it. . . .

“Your much obliged and true friend,

“J. MONTGOMERY.

“Miss Eliz. Rowntree, Scarborough.”

*James Montgomery to John Holland.*

“Sheffield, Aug. 25. 1832.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,

“You will wonder, and perhaps be grieved, that I have not earlier broken my promise *not* to write to you at Newcastle. Since your departure from this neighbourhood, there have been as many reasons as there have been days and hours why I have been so faithful to an engagement never intended to be kept. . . . So much for business, which I hope will be satisfactory to you, who are the worst tradesman in the world except myself, according to the best judgment I can form of the character of each of us, and my personal knowledge of the eight hundred millions of our fellow-creatures, who, we are told, are our contemporaries.

“You left Sheffield just at the time — the very hour, I might say — when the new era in the history of your native place commenced. For five weeks afterwards we were agitated, amused, and tormented with electioneering scenes, speeches, and surprises, — first one, then another, then a third and then a fourth candidate exhibiting himself and his pretensions, in person and by proxy, to the electors in embryo, of whom at least a thousand of the eggs are likely to be addled

from the oversitting of the old hen that laid them in St. Stephen's Chapel,—I allude especially to the grinders.\* . . . A subject of far more concern has occupied much of my time since your removal,—the cholera came among us immediately afterwards, and of its daily devastations you have been sufficiently informed by the newspapers. Soon after the official establishment of the Board of Health I was appointed chairman, and have never neglected my duties in that capacity, so far as I understood them, on any occasion. I cannot say much on the subject in reference to my personal feelings; but I will state, in acknowledgment of the goodness of the Lord in keeping me still in the land of the living, that I have hitherto (amidst occasional natural apprehensions) been preserved from tormenting fears, and have been enabled to stay my soul upon Him whose I am and whom it is my prayer (comprehending all that I can ask or think) that I may serve and love with all my ransomed powers and sanctified affections.

“I have often thought that you may have been taken hence from the evil that might have befallen you had you continued to reside where you were born, as you must daily, in coming to town, have passed through the ‘city of the plague,’—‘Sheffield Park,’ so honoured by being associated with your name, and its better part immortalised by your muse, having been more severely visited by the Destroyer than any other section of the town; and *twice* every twenty-four hours the mourners going about the streets, following the dead cart, carrying to their long home those who had fallen by the sudden stroke between night and morning, and between morning and evening. The burial-place is a field opposite the Shrewsbury Hospital, including that footpath which was stopt up some two or three years ago, to my annoyance and yours too, where generations had trod for centuries in their way of life, but where now no foot will step again for an age to come without communicating a sympathetic chill to the heart capable of such emotion in memory of those who lie

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\* Whose claims to vote were considered questionable.

below. It is a place of peculiar character — ‘a field to bury strangers in;’ — for they are separated from their families, a sad community, all of whom died of one disease ! I will say no more. . . .

“Believe me ever your friend,

“J. MONTGOMERY.

“Mr. Holland, ‘Courant’ Office, Newcastle.”

*James Montgomery to George Bennet.*

“Sheffield, Aug. 10. 1832.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,

“It is indeed a long time since I wrote to you, and yet I do not know that I have anything to say, except to thank you for your two most kind letters received in the interval, each of which I would fain have answered on the spot after reading, if in a moment I could have expressed what I could feel in a moment of gratitude and humiliation for your continued remembrance of one so truly conscious of his unworthiness as I am whenever my fellow-creatures speak friendly to me, amidst the daily shifting scenes of your peregrinations through the loveliest parts of our land, (everywhere more or less beautiful), and your sojournings among the best of its inhabitants, ‘the excellent of the earth.’ But so bad an economist am I of that most precious commodity which man has entrusted to him for the improvement and enjoyment of all the rest of Heaven’s gifts to him on earth, — so bad an economist am I of time, — that I fear it may be affirmed, — nay, is it not recorded where it shall not be blotted out till the day of judgment? — that, except drawing each breath as it comes in its turn, because I cannot procrastinate one without breaking the succession beyond the possibility of recovery, I scarcely do anything in season ; but every hour, if not every section of every hour, is more or less occupied — if occupied at all — by doing that which should have been done days, weeks, months, and often years ago. This is literally the case when I am lamenting that which has been irrecoverably misspent, or employing that which is in hand in preparing



for that which is to come, and may or may not arrive in this world; though if I be cut off from it here, it will only be to meet it where time is eternity. No wonder, then, I am too frequently behindhand with my correspondents, and that their letters—though always as welcome as roses in June, and never withering *within*, but, as often as I open their leaves, putting forth all their beauty, and sending all their fragrance into my soul—nevertheless lie upon my table till they are (on the *outside*) thorns in my eye, so that I am afraid to touch them even with a finger, as they are apt to prick me to the heart when thus disturbed, after their dates have become a little antique. Yours, therefore, share the fate of those of my oldest and best correspondents; and the value which I put on them must not be judged by my slowness of hand to acknowledge how acceptable they have been, and how fervently I have wished they *had been* duly honoured! But I must now turn to mention two or three small particulars before I reach the foot of the next page, which will be almost as speedily as a tumble from the top to the foot of a Welsh or Westmoreland hill, if I can fill the remainder of this sheet *as much with nothing* as I have already done the first leaf, back and face, to my shame! We have all been gratified to learn by your communications to Mr. Roberts, as well as to myself, that from ‘sundry kinds of deaths’ you have been again most manifestly, and why should I not say marvellously, preserved. You may well feel that you are in the path of duty, when, not less in providence than in grace, you are so mercifully upheld in your goings. I had intended to have met you with a letter among the lakes and the mountains of the north, and under such cover have introduced you to the poets of those renowned regions; but when I understood that Dr. Raffles was to be with you there, such interference of mine seemed unnecessary, as I was sure that if you were with him at Keswick or Grasmere, you could not fail finding your way into the company of Southey and Wordsworth, where I was equally sure you would be made cordially welcome. Your remarks on the late schism in our Sunday School Union are such as might have been

expected from the father of that hitherto happy and prosperous fraternity : they are therefore worthy of you and the feelings that prompted them ; and the principles which make such feelings elementary in your nature, since it was renewed (I trust) by the Spirit of God, are their own reward, and are of a species of blessedness which it is not the privilege of all good people to enjoy.

“ You must be aware, from the newspapers, that since the 8th of July, when the first case appeared, that new pestilence which both walketh in darkness and destroyeth at noon-day,— the fearful and mysterious cholera, — has been smiting down, on the right hand and on the left, men, women, children here. The last three or four days the number of new patients has been greatly increased beyond all former proportion,— a hundred since Tuesday,— though the mortality has not kept proportionate pace. The whole return this day, for four weeks and six days, is 352 cases, 122 deaths, 145 remaining. Coward as I am in nerve and muscle, I have been preserved from much more than *that* fear of death in which I live daily, even when the ‘ end of all things here ’ seems farthest off. But it is impossible for flesh and blood, united to soul and spirit, not to be deeply moved, and painfully sensible sometimes of that mortality which may be realised to the hardiest and healthiest of us in a moment. But I find this assurance in that book which contains the words of eternal life, — ‘ Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusted in thee.’ God bless you !

“ Your friend,

“ J. MONTGOMERY.

“ George Bennet, Esq., Independent Chapel,  
Bridlington.”

The cholera, which had now nearly subsided on the banks of the Tyne and the Wear, increased to such an extent in Sheffield, that the 22nd of August was kept as a day of special humiliation and prayer by the inhabitants ; and assuredly never before had *such a day* been *so* observed ! Montgomery, who daily took an active part with the clergy, civil authorities, and medical

staff in meeting the perilous and solemn exigences of the occasion, composed two appropriate hymns\*, which were used in the different churches and chapels of the town.

Miss Rowntree was not the only one of his friends who would fain have had him leave Sheffield during the fearfully fatal visitation of the cholera; but his answer to her solicitation was, in substance, that which he returned to others:—

“Now a word or two for that part of your letter which refers to myself, and the circumstances of apparent peril in which I seem to stand, and the cordial offer of refuge which you once more, and probably for the last time, propose to me. I have so repeatedly been put to the inexpressible pain of doing what is most painful in friendship to a sensitive and a grateful heart (which I yet trust mine, with all its perversities, is),—refusing kindness,—that I will not now torture language—rather, torture my own feelings and grieve yours—by attempting to find new terms under which to make the evasion of your inducement to visit Scarborough less ungracious than I fear, say what I will, it may seem to you. I am at present where I ought to be; and no more than I dare run into the way of danger, dare I run out of it. From the commencement of the Board of Health under the Act of Parliament, I have been daily in attendance at it (with the exception of a brief visit to Fulneck); and the dreadful disease, of whose ravages I have been thus almost every hour informed or reminded in some way or other, has become so familiar to my thoughts, that no other subject, I believe, has more occupied them, though a multitude of other concerns have relieved the burthen by exchanging it for their own. I have thus far been preserved from torment—

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\* “Let the land mourn through all its coasts,” &c.; and—

“It is the Lord! — Behold his hand,” &c. — *Orig. Hymns.*

ing fear, and in quite as much health as I ever enjoy. I have indeed had many serious and awful feelings and forebodings of what might happen to myself as likely as to any one of my ninety thousand neighbours ; and the infirmity of flesh and blood, and the anticipation, however feeble, of that eternal issue which must follow the appearance of my own disembodied spirit, sinner that I am, in the presence of the God who made me, who has watched every thought of my mind as it rose, and pursued it through all its consequences — these at times have made me exceedingly to tremble, and ask myself what will that issue be? But though the daily fear of death, in my best estate, is one of the crosses which I must bear to the end of life, I can say, to the glory of the grace of God, that hitherto it has not been made *much* heavier by the near prospect of its realisation.”

Eleven days afterwards he thus writes to the same correspondent : —

*James Montgomery to Miss Rowntree.*

“ Sheffield, Sept. 12. 1832.

“ MY DEAR FRIEND,

“ I am happy to inform you that I can comparatively report ‘clean bills’ of our unfortunate town, — though I verily believe that which seems to justify such an ill-omened epithet has already proved one of the greatest means of grace and blessing to the inhabitants of Sheffield in the memory of man ; and I am sure, if we make the right improvement of the providential visitation, thousands will be the better for it so long as they live, and their children after them for many generations. That it will be extensively so, I fear that I have too little faith even to say that I hope, unless a deeper and more abiding effect be produced than past experience warrants those who know something of the plague of their own hearts to expect. But the Lord’s purposes will be answered, and we must acquiesce in them, only giving all diligence to profit for ourselves, that we may not have been spared in vain, — or worse than in vain, if after all we perish ;

for then we shall be so far greater sinners than those that have fallen, when they were *not* sinners above us. Three weeks ago a day of humiliation was more solemnly observed here with outward show, and I believe with inward reality of self-abasement, repentance, and confession of sin, than I ever recollect during forty years' residence in Sheffield. Be this as it may, the *fact is a fact* (I know not how more emphatically to express it) that thenceforward to this day the disease has been rebuked and gradually abating, the new cases being mitigated exceedingly on the average in their symptoms; and we have good hope that it will now please the Lord to withdraw his hand, which has been laid upon us rather with the *violence of mercy* than the rigour of vengeance. Your best friends, therefore, — your mother, your brother, and H. B. himself, I trust, — may safely permit you to breathe the atmosphere of Sheffield at this lucid interval. Such I call it (though I pray that it may be an interval to the end of time), because in most great towns there has been a second harvest of death granted to this destroyer, when less discrimination has been shown between the suffering poor and the classes who have more abounded in the means of prevention and cure. I need not say, that I shall be sincerely glad to see you again, to whom I am indebted for so much kindness; and I can only lament that it is so little in my power to acknowledge it otherwise than in words. With best remembrance to your esteemed relatives,

“ I am, truly, your obliged friend,

“ J. MONTGOMERY.”

When the visitation was over, and a day of thanksgiving (Nov. 22.) was ordered, the praises of the religious portion of his townspeople were uttered in the words\* of the Sheffield poet. The victims of the pestilence were buried about a mile out of the town, on a pleasant eminence since beautified by plantations, and rendered more conspicuous by a lofty obelisk. This spot,

\* Original Hymns, CCXCI. and CCXCII.

unconsecrated by any rite except the reading of the ordinary service for "the burial of the dead," and the dust of the victims who were thus even "in death divided from their nearest kin," is celebrated by Montgomery in his lines entitled the "Cholera Mount." \*

His respected Quaker correspondent, Miss Rowntree, being about to become the wife of Henry Bewley, of Dublin, she mentioned the matter to the poet, with the expression of a hope that he would approve the change both in the sphere of duty and departure from Yorkshire which it involved. He at once congratulated her on the "good tidings," in terms that might have been used by one standing in *loco parentis* to a self-reliant but not undutiful ward: "I am heartily glad you have done as you have done—that is, as you pleased—in an affair which, between two honest and discreet parties, rarely needs the interference of a third. You now very ingenuously ask my leave for taking a step which you had predetermined to take: you have it, I assure you, with much less reserve and qualification than I could

\* Works, p. 337.

In other places the ordinary community of sepulture was, in like manner, denied to the victims. The ground at York, which was set apart for their interment, contains a head-stone in memory of Joseph Marsh, erected by his fellow-teachers of Lendal Chapel Sunday School, with the following lines from the pen of Montgomery:—

"The bitterness of death is past,  
Joy comes which shall for ever last;  
Happy the man, through fire or ice,  
Who finds his way to Paradise:  
This hath our fellow-soldier done;  
Sharp was the fight, but quickly won.  
When the last enemy assailed,  
Although the flesh was weak, and failed,  
The spirit was willing and prevailed."



have given it had the negotiation been in suspense on which hung the whole future of your life." He then remarks on her prospect of nuptial happiness, adding, "Now, since I shall appear to you to hold in such high and honourable esteem the state to which you look forward, you will no doubt wonder more than ever you did, — if, indeed, you ever took the trouble to wonder at it, — why I myself have not been brought into the same. My answer is, that I am conscientiously a bachelor, and I must leave you to judge whether I have been very wicked, or only very unfortunate, that such a blight and mildew should have fallen upon me, and remained till it is too late for even hope to imagine the possibility of its removal, any more than the renewal of my youth, or the revival of a heart, not dead perhaps, but long closed up in an entrancement, which dreams may sometimes visit, but realities never." On the 22nd of December, he acknowledges, "and most probably for the last time, a letter from Elizabeth Rowntree which she might as well have signed at full length, seeing she is not likely to have much practice in subscribing that autograph in time to come. By whatever signature, however, she may address me, I shall be glad to receive her communications."

We have seen but one letter from Montgomery to his respected correspondent after she became Mrs. Bewley. It is too personal for insertion; but we may here mention that her bridal and her burial followed each other within less than twelve months. On hearing of her death the poet immediately addressed the subjoined letter to her early-bereaved husband, to whose kindness we are indebted for the use of the voluminous correspondence of which characteristic specimens have been presented to our readers. As a sincere and highly esteemed member of the Society of Friends, it is

due to her memory, in such relation, to say that her long and untiring exertions as a contributor and collector of pecuniary aid for the Moravian missions, was never either hindered or hampered by any querulous allusion to those well-known differences of opinion and practice which subsist between her own religious communion and that of which Montgomery was at once the grateful almoner and the honoured representative. Nor, on the other hand, did he omit frequently and conscientiously to remind the fair Quakeress that even in the schools to which she so generously and laudably contributed support, religion was daily taught, and the worship of God duly maintained.

*James Montgomery to Henry Bewley.*

“Sheffield, Dec. 19. 1833.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,

“Your welcome but mournful letter duly arrived, and ought long ago to have been acknowledged with the thankfulness which I felt, but knew not how to express, for your kindness in communicating so particularly the circumstances (that at once wring and rejoice the heart at their recollection), accompanying the departure of your endeared and inestimable partner from a world which she had made better by her presence wherever she appeared, to one where, if she have no suffering to relieve, no sorrow to soothe, she will have none of either to exercise her faith and patience;—and she had much of both here; but as she knew where to find consolation for herself, she was ever prompt and well prepared to comfort those who were in tribulation, by the comfort wherewith she was wont to be comforted of God. And now, as we most fervently believe, since God hath himself wiped away all tears for ever from her eyes, she will have other services than those of mercy, no longer needed where sin and misery cannot come, wherewith to show her love to Him who loved her and washed

her from her sins in his own blood, and has now placed her as a pillar in his temple, to go no more out for ever. To remember her, is so necessarily to remember her works of faith and labours of love, that from the fulness of the heart, I could not help, prematurely perhaps (but I write not a formal letter of condolence), alluding to them at once, and I have been thence, unconsciously almost, carried out of myself, to imagine how differently but delightfully contrasted with these must be her occupations now ; — yet in these she found her delight, and the pleasures for evermore, which we trust she is enjoying at God's right hand, are of the same kind, though infinitely exalted and refined from every possible alloy, as those which were the secret sweet reward of her well-doing, while she was sacrificing every thing else — ease, comfort, health, life itself — to do good from the pure principle of love to God and obedience to the gospel of his Son, to keep whose commandments and copy whose example was the happiness of her days, few and full of trials as they were. . . . The intelligence of her too early for us, but just the right time for her, removal, — because it was the Lord's time, — had reached me a few days before ; and though, from the last communication which I received from her (about midsummer), and which I answered more punctually than I was wont, I was prepared to hear of indisposition, and even prolonged suffering, I was struck with amazement at being told of her decease. Then, as in one moment, all *her* worth and all *our* loss were so impressed upon me, that I seemed never to have appreciated the one as I ought before, nor calculated how much the other would be felt by many who had proved her kindness — not relatives and friends only, but the poor, the destitute, and the afflicted, whom she cared for within her no small circle of beneficence, as though they were her own kin and connections — not strangers, whom her Christian charity made her brethren and sisters. But I must say no more on that subject, which in reference to her is an uncharitable one. So little in fact did she live for herself, and so much for others, that, in estimating the bereavement, I cannot help

including in its calamitous consequences hundreds to whom, had she lived, she would have been as a ministering angel, in hunger, and in thirst, and nakedness; strangers, sick and in prison, whom she would have visited, relieved, and consoled through every year that we fondly hoped would have been added to her life. But she had learned in every prayer to say, ‘Father, not my will, but thine be done.’ This is the highest and happiest attainment of faith; it is the assurance of hope and the perfection of love. Her Father’s will and our Father’s too has been done; and no more than she can lament it in heaven, ought we to repine on earth. But it is no sin to grieve even at the death of the righteous, while we are learning imperative lessons of resignation from such disposals, by divine wisdom and infinite love, of those who are lent to us awhile to render earth more pleasant, and taken from us to render heaven more desirable, that we may be reunited with them for ever. . . .

Farewell, — and I mean Farewell in the best sense of the phrase. The Lord bless you, and keep you, make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you now and ever. We may meet no more here; but where we humbly, firmly, affectionately believe her to be with the redeemed of the Lord, who have already passed through all tribulation to eternal rest, may we and all who yet survive of those whom she esteemed, in God’s good time meet round the footstool of his throne, to praise Him for all his dispensations towards us!

“I am truly, your obliged friend,

“J. MONTGOMERY.

“Mr. Henry Bewley.”

*James Montgomery to John Holland.*

“Sheffield, Oct. 23. 1831.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,

“I must send you lead for gold, and be your debtor for the difference of value between your epistle — worth more than it might in that precious metal — and this, not worth postage, as I foresee. I have no news to tell you but what

you have seen from week to week in the Iris, which is no longer *your* 'Iris' nor *mine* ! O how changed, and surely *not* for the better ; for if it *be*, I must have spent thirty-one years of my life upon it worse than in vain. But I seldom pass the shop that was Mr. Blackwell's ; and when I do I feel as if a cold cloud went over the sun and chilled the blood in my veins, — I mean *literally*, so do not think too much of my sufferings, — just as, on a bright shining December day of dry frost, when one almost forgets that it is winter, till suddenly reminded of the fact by such an incident. The shop, I must say, looks cleaner and smarter than it used to do ; but I turn away my eyes and am glad when I reach windows above, for which I never cared a straw, and now care no more though they are all translated into *plate glass*, and exhibit such fine things as tempt the fairest part of creation to crowd the causeway, and make me wish them far enough, while I wind my way through them as I would through a china show-room, or a florist's garden when tulips and ranunculuses are in their glory. There is, however, another mass of masonry, which I often (with all the perversity of a son of Adam) long to see, for two reasons, — first, because I can see it no longer ; and next, because when I could, I only endured the sight of it for your sake. You might have carried your house away on your back like a snail, so totally and so contemporaneously did it disappear with yourself ! I think it was the very day after you went that, on my way to Park Grange, I naturally looked for the old gable end, and wearied my eye to find it on the hill side ; nor was it till I had recollected hearing you or Miss Gales say that some improvements were in progress on the premises, that I discovered a goodly-fronted mansion, with as many windows as Mr. Pitt himself could have desired to count in every cottage in the kingdom when he was meditating that tax on light for which he deserved to walk in darkness to his grave, built abreast of the aforesaid gable, and completely eclipsing it. I walked up to the road after dinner on purpose to explore the site ; and though I always deemed your darling home a flaw even in the mean Park Hill side, I did and do



regret its removal, — though, forgetting you, if I could, I should certainly think the change the best that had taken place in the building line since I knew that dreary slope. Now for your letter. . . . I thank you for giving me an opportunity of forwarding to you the two hymns which I wrote for the day of humiliation ; don't, however, publish them. The thoughts of seeing anything of mine in print which has not passed in proof under my eye (and even then I am not safe as you shall know) torment me now, I think, more than ever they did, accustomed as I am to be printed and misprinted. In the 'Iris' last week, for example, to my utter consternation, I saw my 'Skylark' \* (composed for Mrs. Everett's album on an actual incident) copied from the 'Forget-me-not' for 1833, with two of the leading verses placed at the end, and some intervening ones before ! You have heard of the horse with his head where his tail should be, but yet the poor animal survived the transposition ; for he had only to turn round to the manger, and he would find his head in the right place : not so my unhappy stanzas. Away I went to the office to scold, when Mr. Bridgeford coolly produced the volume itself, and showed me my poor 'Skylark' mutilated and displayed in like manner—and I had read the 'proof' of it ! I had rather have seen a screech-owl, at a barn-side amidst the gibbeted remains of crows, and weasels, and foomarts, than my poor bird amid all the gaudy animals full wing on their flight to *oblivion* along the beautiful pages of Ackerman's 'Forget-me-not.' To add to my comfort, he told me that the same piece had already been copied into other newspapers as a specimen of the verse in the New Book, with due commendation ! There's fame for you, — fame with a vengeance ! . . .

"I am very truly, your affectionate friend,

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"Mr. John Holland,  
'Courant' Office, Newcastle."

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\* Works, p. 334.



*James Montgomery to John Holland.*

“ Sheffield, Oct. 30. 1832.

“ DEAR FRIEND,

“ I have just received and read your ‘ Tyne Banks ’ with as much pleasure as you yourself could expect the subject, the performance, and the author were likely to awaken. I never encourage you to write poetry, but when you *have* written I will always encourage you as much as I can. I love topographical verse, however humble it be, because of the picturesque and historical associations that link ages and ages with scenes and scenes in succession, the same in site, but every generation assuming a different aspect. When I can accompany you in person, as well as on Pegasus, from the double fountains of the Tyne to the mouth of it, I shall enjoy your descriptions a hundred times more from having the actual images and objects before my eyes. In this flight you have risen as high as you aimed, and though you never get above your subject, — the level of the river, or the hills on its banks, — you have done it and yourself honour on the whole, and the good people of Newcastle will surely think that a man with a head on his shoulders has come to visit and sojourn among them. Of Newcastle Bards, since the two which you celebrate (and they were, each after his kind, original and exquisite), I have heard nothing, or remember nothing, which is worse still, for a poet had better never be named than forgotten ; but as no doubt there must be on the ‘ Tyne Banks ’ many a young cygnet who would fain be a swan, you will be sought after, and Pilgrim Street will have a new title to its name, from the multitude of youthful aspirants who will throng to the ‘ Courant ’ Office to get a peep at you. Happy then will be the favoured few who can obtain an interview, and opportunity of rubbing themselves against your elbow to be made poets, as they make magnets, by friction.

“ I was most curious to see what effect the first sight of the ocean would have upon you ; but to be well prepared for it, I had the self-denial to make the whole voyage with you, inland,

to feel the full influence of the passage, whatever it might be, at the right place and in the right time, — instead of turning (which I might have done at once) to where I was sure it must be found. Well, I was not disappointed; the two stanzas are worthy of the subject and the occasion; for the first moment of realising what one has been thinking about more or less ever since one was born, is one of the few in human life that become immortal.\* You know, I think, that I do not encourage *anybody*, not even myself, to write poetry in this utilitarian age: I mention this that you may not think that the remark above made was intended personally for you. The public will not read, therefore it is in vain to scribble except when one cannot help it.

“I am truly your friend,

“J. MONTGOMERY.

“Mr. John Holland, ‘Courant’ Office, Newcastle.”

The Rev. Christian Frederic Ramftler, the worthy Moravian minister who had received Montgomery into the Brethren’s congregation at Fulneck, died at Bristol, October 25th; and the letter which conveyed to the poet the tidings of that event contained also a request for an appropriate hymn to be sung at a love-feast which would be held in connection with the funeral: the verses beginning “Rest from thy labours, rest,” † were composed and sung on that occasion.

\* “Tyne Banks” was a poetical effusion of forty pages printed for presentation to the author’s friends: it describes a ramble alongside the celebrated river which, rising in the west country “above Newcastle, passes that town in navigable volume, and after presenting a busy scene for a dozen miles, falls into the sea at Tyne-mouth,” as described in the stanzas alluded to by Montgomery. The “Newcastle Bards” were, of course, Akenside and Cunningham — the former born, the latter buried in that town.

† Original Hymns. A volume, comprising a Memoir and Select Remains of Mr. Ramftler, was published in 1833 by the Rev. Thomas Grinfield, M.A.

On the 14th of December the first election of two parliamentary representatives for the newly-created borough of Sheffield took place, when that fearful foreboding of some concomitant calamity which had, as we have seen, quenched Montgomery's disposition to take part in recent local rejoicings, was but too largely realised. There were four candidates, all Liberals; and on the announcement that Messrs. John Parker and J. S. Buckingham were elected, some outrages ensued — the military were sent for, and, after the reading of the Riot Act, were ordered to fire: five persons were killed, and several others more or less severely wounded on this painfully-remembered occasion! A few days afterwards, he writes to a friend: — “ You were much misinformed on the subject; *one* man was *not* the only one to blame on that dreadful occasion. The trial for the blood then shed in our streets cannot take place in this world: there is evidence which will require the light of a burning world to disclose.”

## CHAP. LXX.

1833.

MONTGOMERY ELECTED PRESIDENT OF THE SHEFFIELD PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.—ATHERSTONE'S LECTURES ON POETRY.—LETTER TO JAMES EVERETT.—PUBLICATION OF LECTURES DELIVERED BEFORE THE ROYAL INSTITUTION.—LETTER FROM MRS. GALES.—MOXON'S SONNETS.—CONVERSATIONS.—LETTER TO THE REV. R. WOOD.—TO GEORGE BENNET.—ILLNESS OF MONTGOMERY.—OBSERVANCE OF THE SABBATH.—PENAL PUNISHMENTS FATAL TO HEALTH.—VERSES TO HARRIET MONTGOMERY.—“VILLAGE MAGAZINE.”

ON the 4th of January Montgomery was again elected President of the Sheffield Literary and Philosophical Society, an office in which he was presently called upon to discharge a duty as unpleasant as it was unexpected. At the first meeting of the council of the Society, it was determined to engage Mr. Edwin Atherstone to deliver a course of six lectures before the members, “On the Nature and Principles of Poetry.” The president shared in the general anticipation of an elegant and instructive treat: but after the delivery of the first and second lectures, the major portion of the audience felt so dissatisfied with the unusually declamatory manner in which long passages of poetry were recited, that a special meeting of the council was called to take into consideration the complaints made on this subject. It was there stated, that the secretary had already addressed a friendly letter of remonstrance to the lecturer, requesting him “materially to shorten his illustrations, and to *read* instead of *reciting* them.” This sentiment,

the remonstrant said, he held "in common with the whole of the council, and with their esteemed president himself." Concurrently with these official proceedings, there appeared some anonymous notices of the lectures in the Sheffield newspapers, which Mr. Atherstone, in a long letter to the Society, characterised as "brutal attacks;" complaining, at the same time, of injury done to his character and prospects as a lecturer. In consequence of this allegation, another special meeting of the council was held, at which it was resolved, that a statement of the whole case, as prepared and read by Montgomery, should be placed in the records of the Society, and a copy transmitted to Mr. Atherstone.\*

As we have said, this was an unpleasant service to Montgomery, who, himself a poet and a lecturer, felt how liable he was to be made personally responsible, or at least to be hardly thought of, for a course of conduct in which he only acted ministerially: and not the less so, inasmuch as the style of delivery complained of was so entirely dissimilar to his own.† If it should now be thought—as was said by some persons at the time—that the question between the parties being one of taste merely, the lecturer was somewhat hardly dealt with;

\* Vide Appendix A. at the end of this volume.

† His own manner of reading in public, although delicately varied in unison with the sentiment expressed, was wholly unaffected—doubtless, in the opinion of many persons, too unimpassioned; and while he never, to use his own phrase, "set traps to catch applause," he often disappointed his auditors in their attempts to render it. In his opinion, "the rarest art of speech, good reading, especially of verse, is seldomer attained than eloquent declamation;" to say nothing of that "indifferent, vulgar, or boisterous recitation," which is often the most attractive to many persons. The late J. P. Kemble used to say, "Reading should be *Reading*."

be it so: nevertheless, the writer of this paragraph, having been present at the delivery of all the lectures, is bound to say that, in his opinion, the official interference alluded to in the foregoing document was justified, if not indeed rendered imperative, under the circumstances of the case. If there was one person in Mr. Atherstone's audience who probably thought otherwise, it was Ebenezer Elliott, while he listened to a striking passage from his own powerful poem of "Bothwell," which was delivered with a tone, gesture, and look of dramatic energy and propriety which would doubtless have won, as it deserved, due applause in a theatre.

*James Montgomery to James Everett.*

"Sheffield, March 23. 1833.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"I cannot lay my hand upon your last letter, but by this time you must wish to lay yours on the answer to it." [Here followed, in answer to the inquiry of some person through Mr. E. about the management of the "Montgomery Sick Society," an account of an unsuccessful attempt to engraft on that "crab-stock" such slips of the "Becher system" of management as were to produce, in due season, the golden apples with which the parent tree that grew beside Southwell Minster was abundantly loaded.] "The next subject, which I am glad seemed of interest to yourself in your letter, was the probability of the publication of those papers on Poetry and General Literature which, in the sessions of 1830 and 1831, I read before the Royal Institution of Great Britain. I do not know who may have intimated to you as a secret, what I had neither divulged or concealed,—namely, the simple fact, that I had been for two or three months preparing those essays for the press. There needed no trumpet to be sounded while this humble process was going on at my desk, for I am an author (whether in verse or prose) far too unfashionable to set the mountains in



labour to produce a mouse of my creation. I hesitated not, however, to mention it to the two or three people in this wide world who care a straw for what I do before it is absolutely done, and who when it is done wish that everybody else may be as well pleased with it as they were determined to be before it appeared, and after it has appeared determine to continue so for consistency's sake and for mine,—though consistency and I are two very different things. Now as you are one of those 'few' (I hope you all belong to *the* few whom poets affect alone to court, loving 'the many' as the fox the grapes), had you come in my way, when my purpose was sufficiently formed (for it took as much time to grow into effect as a pearl in an oyster shell, at the bottom of the sea), I should have told it *you*, and given you perfect liberty to tell it to whom you pleased, with equal freedom of speech to them to communicate it from mouth to ear all round the globe, till in the heart of Japan, and on the Mountains of the Moon in mid-Africa,—aye, and in Market Street, Manchester!—my forthcoming Lectures on Poetry should be the hope of nations, and the talk of blue-stockings ladies! This is the only way in which I have always given note of preparation when I was about to commit 'a feeble outrage on the public,' as the Edinburgh reviewer of 1807 called my 'Wanderer of Switzerland,' when he prophesied that in three years it would be no more heard of. Poets may be prophets, but critics are not; the 'Wanderer' and his train of little lyrics live yet to disgrace the author or the reviewer, —I care not which, if the latter is to be the judge. The eleventh edition of that volume expurgated by 'bell, book, and candle,' from the 'Muses' Library,' by the Pope of Parnassus (in this respect as infallible as the Pope of Rome), was published last year. You ask, if I recollect rightly, whether in these essays I have introduced any matter from articles of my composition in the 'Eclectic Review,' when I myself was a censor of my contemporaries. Certainly; having a right to commit plagiarism on myself to any extent I pleased (though in Manchester, I hear, you do not allow folks to steal their own goods and chattels, without

being liable to tread-mill or transportation),\* I have availed myself of many passages in those ephemeral writings which I thought worthy of another day's existence in another form.

“ I am truly your friend,

“ J. MONTGOMERY.”

In a long letter of local news, addressed to Mr. Bennet on the 26th of March, 1833, Montgomery writes : —

“ You say, ‘ Do, my dear friend, on some sunshiny day, tell me how you are in the Hartshead,’ &c. Now, my dear friend, in extenuation of my long delay, if you can name any one day since you wrote last (happily you have given no date, and thus one blush is spared me when looking your letter in the face), which has been ‘ sunshiny,’ I will confess that I am much more culpable than I can think myself for not having complied with your request sooner. The latter half of winter seems half the year to me; and cold in all its dreary forms, by day and night, — moist, dry, dark, wind, rain, hail, snow, cloud, storm, &c., — fret and try my nerves and my spirits so much, when, as at present, I am full of petty affairs, that I am ready to give all up. Daily, however, yea *moment by moment*, I have cause to be humbled and thankful for mercies numberless as these, and of the value of eternity itself if I knew rightly how to turn them to account. I have been preparing my Lectures at the Royal Institution for the press; I hope they will appear next month, or in May.”

In the spring of this year, Montgomery printed a volume of “ Lectures on Poetry and General Literature,” with a dedication to the “ President and Managers of the Royal Institution of Great Britain,” before whom they were originally delivered in 1831-2; permission having been formally given thus to dedicate the work at a numerous meeting of the managers, with the Duke

\* This refers to an individual who had abstracted some of his property after being declared insolvent.

of Somerset in the chair. The Essays, eight in number, bear the following titles:—1. The Pre-eminence of Poetry among the Fine Arts. 2. What is Poetical. 3. The Form of Poetry. 4. The Diction of Poetry. 5. Various Classes of Poetry. 6. On the Poetical Character; the Themes and Influences of Poetry. 7. A Retrospect of Literature, from the Earliest Period to the Twelfth Century of the Christian Era; comprising the following Subjects:—The Permanence of Words—The General Forms of Literature—Early Poetry—Early Eloquence—Invention of Letters—Modes of Writing—Sacred Literature—Literature of the Hindoos—Literature of the Chaldeans, Babylonians, &c.—Speculation on the Original Use of Hieroglyphics—Ancient Greek Literature—Athens—The Decline of Greek Literature—Greek and Roman Polity contrasted—The Common People of Greece—The Common People of Rome—Roman Literature—Literature during the Middle Ages—Mahomet—The Literature of the Saracens—The Revival of Literature in Europe. 8. A View of Modern English Literature, comprising the Period under the Tudors and the First Stuarts—From the Restoration to the Reign of George the Third—English Literature of the Present Age—Contemporary Poets—The Drama—Novels and Romances—The Periodical Press. The foregoing will afford some idea of the interest, variety, and relation of topics introduced and discussed; though the latter term must be understood with considerable limitation when applied to the contents of a single volume of only four hundred pages. Indeed, the interest of these Lectures—at all events, to the *reader*, as compared with the *hearer* of them—is rather lessened than increased by such a variety of subjects, as neither affording space for ample discussion, nor scope for sustained flights of oratory.

And at neither of these ends, however, did the lecturer aim; to move thought rather than to pour forth words—to instruct, rather than to excite or astonish his hearers or his readers, was ever his main object. It is by this rule—the extent to which composition affords clear and definite ideas of appreciable truth, of *real meaning*—that Montgomery's productions, whether in prose or rhyme, *per se*, or by comparison with those of other modern authors, can be fully and fairly estimated. In the preface to the Lectures, the author himself modestly says that, having ventured to lay them before the public in print, he “dare not go further, in explanation or apology, than to express a hope that, whatever imperfections may be found in them, the candid reader will be more inclined to approve than condemn what he cannot but perceive has been done in good faith, and in honour of a noble art, which its advocate may have

‘Loved, not wisely, but too well:’

that art he pretends not to teach, but merely to illustrate according to his views of its worth and influence.” This volume “sold off in a reasonable time, but not so rapidly as to make him eager to issue a second.” So he wrote in answer to an inquiry about a new edition in 1846; adding, “another course of ‘Lectures on the British Poets’ having been so well received, and comparatively so well rewarded by audiences both in London and in several provincial towns, I have chosen to keep them in manuscript till I have more time and inclination to prepare them for the press; but the plain fact is, that I find people everywhere so much more ready to hear me read, than to read them for themselves, that I have little temptation to kill the goose while she continues to lay golden eggs, for what the dead bird would produce in Paternoster Row Market.”

*James Montgomery to James Everett.*

“ Sheffield, May 27. 1833.

“ MY DEAR FRIEND,

“ At the close of the labours and enjoyments of another Whitsunday festival, I write, with a feather plucked from the wing of one of the last moments as it flits by me for ever,—without being able to testify against me, like millions of its predecessors, that *it* has been *unimproved*,—to remind you of what you cannot forget, unless you do it on purpose, that you are my guest whenever you come to Sheffield, so long (I hope) as I have a home and a heart to welcome and receive you. I heard yesterday, and not before, that you are engaged to preach for the Park Sunday School next Sabbath Day. I shall be happy to afford you the best accommodation in my power during your visit here. Misses Gales join me in kindest regards to Mrs. Everett and yourself. When you become due, you shall be duly honoured, like a good bill, with or without advice,—even at sight.

“ I am truly, your friend,

“ J. MONTGOMERY.

“ Rev. J. Everett, Manchester.”

*Mrs. Gales to James Montgomery.*

“ Washington City (U.S.), June 2. 1833.

“ MY DEAR MONTGOMERY,

“ Very welcome are the letters which greeted us on our arrival here . . . . It is now forty years since you first became a resident in our family, and never, to my knowledge, has a thought, much less an act of unkindness, tarnished the purity of that friendship which we then mutually entertained. Events do not expire at the moment of their occurrence, and it has been our lot to witness many so distinct and various, that time has yet had no power to efface the impression. To one of our advanced age, those circumstances which gave a colour to our future lives live as vividly

in my memory as though they were recent ;—*yes*, there is not a scene, an act, or a conversation which took place during the eventful period which preceded our departure from our native shores, which is not indelibly recorded on the page of memory. Judge then, my dear friend, whether *you* are not a principal and most interesting figure in the *past*. It would fill a volume to record those vicissitudes which have alternately strewed our path of life with flowers and thorns since we landed on cis-Atlantic shores. I trust we have a due sense of the mercies which have followed us all our days, and are grateful to the Giver of all good, that although we have passed our ‘threescore years and ten,’ we still possess the original faculties of nature almost unimpaired . . . We are naturally interested in the subject of *reform* ; yet the *couleur de rose* which personal enthusiasm had once tinted it with has somewhat faded, and our hopes of its final benefit to our still dear country not quite so sanguine since the elections have taken place. . . . Pray with us, my dear friend, that we may meet in ‘another and a better world.’

“ Affectionately your well-wisher,

“ WINIFRED GALES.

“ James Montgomery, Esq., Sheffield.”

*James Montgomery to James Everett.*

“ Sheffield, June 18. 1833.

“ MY DEAR FRIEND,

“ I very unexpectedly lighted on Defoe, who had absconded from his duty as door-keeper to one leaf of a book-case which would not shut close almost ever since I had him from you. When you were here I sought him at his post, but found him not. It seems he deserved (if he could be made to feel) to have been at another post—even a whipping one, for—no, not for his fault, as I was going to say, but his misfortune in being run away with, possibly by myself, and misplaced. I now send him home, and hope that he will arrive safe. That he may not be run away with on the journey, I send him in custody of one whom I am sure nobody between here and Manchester will think of



carrying off — myself, in my last new shape! You have, indeed, seen me in it; but as I wished to *present myself* to you in it, and had not an opportunity of doing so, with a good grace, while you were at Sheffield, I do it now. Accept me, I beseech you, with as much good will as I ‘kiss your hands,’ to use the Italian phrase in friendly epistles, when in this book-form I reach you.

“ In great haste, I am truly, your obliged friend,

“ J. MONTGOMERY.

“ Mr. James Everett, Manchester.”

In a letter to Mr. Moxon, dated July 3., Montgomery, after some remarks on the loss, and what he deems worse still, the misemployment of time on his own part, thus proceeds: —

“ Like a diamond consumed by sunbeams under the focus of a burning glass till it is reduced to the last visible point beyond which it must have been utterly decomposed, such appears to have been my existence here; and the small residuum of the gem to which, however worthless, I have had the presumption to compare it, seems at the end of threescore years to be the only portion of time that I have in anywise well employed: the recollection of a five minutes’ call which I once made upon you I certainly do not include among my time lost. Poets are brethren in spirit, and on paper are spirits to one another, and may converse in words unutterable by the tongue, obstructed by the infirmities of flesh and blood always felt in the bodily presence. But I am rambling from the point at which I aimed when I set out — I mean to thank you for your pretty string of pearls, of equal size but unequal beauty, colour, and kind, yet all pleasing in their degree and plan, — poetical pearls, brought up by diving below in depths of thought, where such treasures alone can be found. I have no room left to criticise: for your precious ‘Sonnets’ I therefore request your acceptance of my ‘Lectures on Poetry,’ which, though I cannot hope that they will improve you in your own art, and mine too, I cannot doubt will be kindly received and indulgently read.”

July 6. *Montgomery*: "Have you read Mrs. Bulmer's elaborate poem on the Life of Christ?" \* *Holland*: "I have only looked into it." *Montgomery*: "I will lend it to you, if you will promise to go through it." *Holland*: "I think I hardly dare borrow it on that condition; and if you have read the whole of it, I am afraid it was rather an act of courtesy to the authoress who complimented you by a presentation copy, than because you were allured by the verse, excellent as some of it is in structure, and altogether pious in its tone." *Montgomery*: "I did, however, read it through, and a great deal of good poetry it contains. The great fault of the poem is, the narrative makes no progress; you read, and read, and read, and still appear to be at, or at most moving about, the point where you set out. It is not like a river, flowing rapidly, or even regularly onward; but rather like a lake, reflecting the sunshine, it may be, but either entirely motionless, or only breaking up the light by its surface ripples." *Holland*: "The subject itself hardly appears to admit of being rendered poetically attractive; and Mrs. Bulmer's poem looked to me like a series of good Methodist sermons turned into rhyme, the strain always orthodox, and sometimes elegant, but never impressive. I think Milton has shown that such a theme is poetically impracticable by his failure in 'Paradise Regained.'" *Montgomery*: "Neither Milton by what he has done, nor Mrs. Bulmer in what she has failed to do, justify such an inference. To say nothing of Klopstock's 'Messiah,' I conceive a poem might be written on the Life of Christ, which should exhibit, in striking combination, both action and sentiment; the whole subordinated to the congruities of Scripture truth. I have been solicited to write a review of Mrs. Bulmer's work for the 'Methodist Ma-

\* "Messiah's Kingdom," by Agnes Bulmer.

gazine;' but I declined to do so, though I have given my opinion freely in a letter to the authoress."

The following letter, addressed to a Wesleyan minister once stationed in Sheffield, and between whom and the poet a cordial friendship subsisted, is too closely characteristic of the writer in one of those "moods of sadness which o'erawed his spirit," to be omitted:—

*James Montgomery to the Rev. Robert Wood.*

"Sheffield, Sept. 9. 1833.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"Your letter was a very unexpected one, and it caught me at a time when I could not say No; and yet my heart would not venture to say Yes, till I had slept upon it, and seen whether another day might not bring another mind. In truth, for several months past, I have been under a cloud, which fell in no showers of refreshment, but seemed to stagnate in the heavens, and chill and darken my very soul. . . . During the past week some dawning of life and warmth of reviving hope roused me to exertion, and natural feeling again began to creep along my nerves and quicken my whole frame. Just then, when existence itself, from being a burthen which I durst not lay down, but found harder to carry as the length of the way to the grave grew shorter, once more became a delight—a delight by the mere relief from oppression and obstruction in all the faculties of mind and body. Even while I was fearing to indulge the gladness which came over me at the change, lest a relapse should instantly ensue, your letter arrived; and judge for yourself whether I could be ungracious to anybody at such a moment. To you at no time could I *be* so, though dire necessity might compel me to act as if I *were*. I laid it down, and determined at least to give it a chance of being answered in the way which the writer and his friends desired and deserved. I must now delay no longer, and as I cannot say No, nothing remains but for you to re-

cord Yes, and claim the fulfilment of the pledge, as though I had given it myself, when the time comes, should I be spared, and not detained fighting with Apollyon in the Valley of Humiliation, or endunged in Doubting Castle. But as I must go softly all my days, if not in the bitterness of my soul, yet, remembering the wormwood and the gall, I must never be high-minded, but fear ;—it therefore becomes me to make promises subject to many contingencies, all of which, without naming any, you will be pleased to include on this occasion. I give you the assurance, however, that from no perversity or caprice of my own will I shrink from once more taking up the cross at your request, though I have declined doing it in every similar instance since we met at Manchester in 1831, except at Shrewsbury and Bristol last year, where I was under express obligation as to the latter, and expected compliance in the former, when an opportunity offered of visiting both places in the same journey. I am almost frightened at what I have thus far written, lest you should be more frightened than you need to be at the strong language which I have used in reference to late and indeed present trials, from the weakness as well as the evil of my nature. But, had you lived with me all the while, you would probably have only deemed me duller and less conversable than usual. My troubles are frequently so much of my own making, not to say imagining, that I keep them, in their worst seasons, as much as possible within my own bosom. The Lord, who knows them, deliver me in his own good time! I will say, unreservedly, though you know it, that the kindness with which Mrs. W. and yourself have repeatedly received me, on the like occasions, would have gone far towards turning the beam, had I only hesitated between Yea and Nay, in favour of the first. The Lord reward you both sevenfold in this life.

“I am, ever truly, your obliged friend,

“J. MONTGOMERY.”

Sept. 16. Mr. Everett called and spent an hour with Montgomery, who said the volume of Lectures on Poetry had not sold well; and that so little were his

own townspeople inclined to pay for that which they were willing to praise when it cost them nothing, that they had, he believed, purchased only about half a dozen copies of the book; so that he should be very careful not to burn his fingers again in this way. He was, however, gratified by the expressions of kindness with which the reviewers, in general, had welcomed the work, and could easily account for one or two exceptions, on special grounds. *Miss Gales*: "Have you seen Hartley Coleridge's volume of poetry?" *Everett*: "No; ten shillings is more than I can afford to give even for such a book with such a name." *Montgomery*: "And I am too poor to purchase the poetry of others at such a price, unless others were more inclined to purchase mine. I sometimes steal a glimpse at the contents of a new book as it passes over Miss Gales's counter; and in this way I have looked into 'Festus,' a poem of a peculiar character, said to be by a person of the name of Bailey, who resides at Nottingham: it contains some very striking, not to say daring passages. By the by, I have received a little volume, entitled the 'Wesleyan Chiefs,' with your name among them: it is written by a poor but pious Lincolnshire school-master, who is starving himself to publish his own poetry, and kindly to aid others in doing the same: for he has implicated me with himself in the revisal of a small volume of verse by a deserted wife who, in addition to claims of pity, adds those of 'ancestral rank,' being descended from a family which came over with the Conqueror!"\* He proceeded to remark that the

\* A Methodist local preacher, of Gainsbro', who inscribed his volume to Montgomery, as an "humble tribute to his piety and genius." Little did the individual whose name was at this time eulogised, with others, in verse as humble as it was religious, anticipate that within a dozen years he should again meet the



“Penny Magazine” and other periodical vehicles of cheap and popular information were entirely changing the character of the market for literature, especially in relation to such authors as himself, who now found it difficult to obtain an audience with the public in the form of a volume.

*James Montgomery to George Bennet.*

“Sheffield, Sept. 25. 1833.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,

“Miss Salt gives me an opportunity of shaking hands with you I know not where, with nothing between the actual contact except this sheet of paper, which must say all that in such a momentary interview I could say were the meeting real. I am always glad to hear of your welfare, and of your works in the best service; and when occasional intimations of your sufferings also reach my ear, my heart is deeply affected, but not discouraged on your account. ‘In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.’ These were among the last words of our Saviour, on the night in which He was betrayed, to his mourning disciples, when sorrow had filled their hearts at the prospect of losing his personal presence. It is very remarkable that, in the same discourse, He says with strong emphasis, *‘I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away,’* &c. (see the context.) In like manner it is good (or ‘expedient’) for his servants still, that they should be tried with afflictions: for even when He withdraws his sensible support, it is that ‘the Comforter’ may ‘come unto’ them; through whom all the blessings of the new covenant in his blood are communicated to those who are his true disciples. I am not aware that you are much tried in this peculiar way; but you cannot expect to escape entirely this thorn in the flesh, otherwise you will never have the perfect

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Lincolnshire poet in so new a character as scarcely to be recognisable — a man of first-rate genius, but without his Christianity! — as the author of the “Purgatory of Suicides; by Thomas Cooper, the Chartist!”



manifestation that his 'grace is sufficient for you, and his strength made perfect in weakness.' By any way, by every way, which He is pleased to appoint may He purify you, till, like gold seven times passed through the fire, you are meet to receive the ineffaceable stamp of his image and superscription! I have no strange things to tell you concerning your friends here. We are, for the most part, going on quietly among one another; but in our intercourse with the world each has some exercises painful to flesh and blood. I have had many of late in respect to public concerns, to which I wish (and I think that I sincerely endeavour) to devote some of the little strength that remains to me, after all the vanities and vexations, as well as the severe sufferings of 'one born to trouble,' who has seen threescore years and one, during which he has brought upon himself more griefs than it was in the power of all his fellow-creatures to have brought upon him. But by the grace of God, I yet am 'the living, the living, to praise Him' for mercy and goodness which have followed me all my days, and will not, I trust, forsake me now. . . .

"Your affectionate friend,

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"George Bennet, Esq."

On the evening of Sept. 30. Montgomery presided at a Wesleyan Missionary Meeting in Norfolk Street Chapel. On this occasion he not only looked ill, but spoke with a tremulousness of voice indicative of the feebleness of body and depression of mind under which, as he said, he had "consented to occupy the chair, and, try to bear the burthen of the Lord thus providentially laid upon him." These were not words of course; for in the week preceding he had suffered from an attack of English cholera, which, as he told Mr. Holland, had brought him nearer to death's door than ever he had been before, except twice, under similar visitations.

He alluded in a touching manner, as he had done elsewhere at a previous meeting, to the death during the past year of those two eminent "Wesleyan Chiefs," Dr. Adam Clarke and the Rev. Richard Watson: the former, he said, had not only been a missionary while a youth, among his native Irish, but he went in old age on a mission to the Shetland Isles, by the shores of which, exactly one hundred years ago that very day, the first Moravian missionary sailed from Copenhagen to Greenland; while the latter, by his admirable "Defence of Missions," had contributed, in no small degree, toward bringing the question of slavery to its present crisis.\*

Passing over several other anniversaries of Religious and Benevolent Societies, which he attended in the course of the present year, we may mention that Montgomery presided at a meeting held in Sheffield, in

\* One speaker, taking his cue from an advertisement in the newspapers, headed "Montgomery's new Poem, 'Woman, the Angel of Life,'" and complimenting the chairman on the honour he had done to the sex, was not a little surprised and abashed by the prompt and significant disclaimer of our poet. Among the hundreds of persons who were misled by the insidious announcement was John Edwards, the friend of Wordsworth, and author of the "Tour of the Dove," who vented his indignation in the form of a sonnet:—

"Is Spencer's witch still living to pursue  
Her magic wiles, as when of snow she made  
False Florimel, to personate the true?  
Or has some muse descended to persuade  
Our senses that a poet stalks in view?  
'MONTGOMERY'S NEW POEM!' Will this do?  
Though spic and span in woman's form arrayed,  
Or, shining angel's? No, we are betrayed."

It is curious that at this time a person, previously unknown to Montgomery, inscribed to him a poetical "Essay on Woman," as "a slight token of admiration of his genius and character."

October, for the purpose of promoting a subscription in aid of Joseph Lancaster, then said to be pining in poverty in the wilds of Canada; and in the month following he spoke at length in favour of the establishment of a School for the Blind, as a "Wilberforce Testimonial" in the city of York. He also took his stand with the local clergy at a public meeting held for the purpose of promoting a better observance of the Lord's Day, where he encountered one of the noisiest and least reasonable groups of opponents which we almost ever witnessed; and this opposition was the more painful, inasmuch as it was directly abetted in the very newspaper which had for so many years, under Montgomery's management, been wholly on the side of "pure and undefiled religion." But the "Iris," having now passed into the hands of a party entertaining widely different views from its original proprietor, admitted into its columns on this occasion a crowd of Anti-Sabbath correspondents under the ostensible guise of *fair play*; and it must be admitted that "*fair play*" for *foul practice*, whether in thought, word, or deed, had its rights but slenderly provided for in our friend's editorial code. We may here add, that could he have foreseen the ultimate religious dereliction of a journal to which the prestige of his name was attached long after his connection with it had entirely ceased, instead of selling, he would have sacrificed the copyright for the sake of annihilating the title.

Oct. 4. Montgomery, although evidently very feeble, appeared in his place as President of the Sheffield Philosophical Society; Mr. Babbage, the celebrated mechanician, being present as a visitor. Dr. Knight read a paper "On the Employment of Criminals in Dry Grinding;" the object of which was to recommend, as a penal occupation, a species of labour which was

pursued by a numerous body of local workmen with manifest injury to their health. The instant the reading ended, the chairman rose with evident feeling, and after bearing his testimony to the ingenuity and ability displayed in the Essay, and expatiating on the humane character of the author, he declared his entire and unequivocal dissent from the leading principle enunciated. Manacles, marking, and mutilation may be barbarously inflicted, but they are less horrible to think of than slow poison of the health: the nose has been slit, the ears cropped, the forehead branded, and even the hand chopped off, as a punishment of criminals in this country; but the most atrocious of this class of inflictions did not necessarily vitiate the fountain of life, by implanting and nourishing the seeds of disease from the fatal fruition of which the unwilling victim has no escape! Dante's "Inferno," said he, which exhibits so many scenes of suffering through twenty cantos, did not, in his opinion, contain any thing more affecting than the brief story of Pia\*, who, encountering the poet in purgatory, tells him how her husband doomed her to perish by confinement in a pestilential morass! When these remarks were met by the argument that if the exposure of criminals to a deleterious employment was so severely to be deprecated, how much more that of our harmless and industrious fellow-townsmen?—Montgomery shook his head, reminding the meeting afterwards that the cases were widely dissimilar; for, to say nothing of the chances of advan-

\* This unfortunate lady was the bride of Nello della Pietra, a grandee of Siena, who, becoming jealous of her, removed his predestined victim to the putrid marshes of Maremma, where she soon drooped and died, without suspicion on her part, or intimation on his, of the hideous purpose for which she had been hurried thither; her gloomy keeper, with a dreadful eye, watching her life go out like a lamp in a charnel vault. — *Life of Dante.*

tageous differences of physical constitution in relation to the trade in question, or the duty and practicability of lessening its injurious tendency with regard to health, there were many necessary avocations of a dangerous or even destructive character, to which men were drawn by interest or compelled by necessity, which were only not utterly intolerable because they are *not* penal. We have seldom heard the poet speak with more animation than he did this evening.

*James Montgomery to the Rev. Robert Wood.*

“Sheffield, Oct. 11. 1833.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,

“Though I am yet very feeble and far from well, I hope, if the Lord please, to come to you with ‘my life in my hand,’—though, blessed be God! it is in *his* rather than in mine, and there I would leave it most unreservedly, at his disposal,—to morrow afternoon in Leeds. I grieve for the sake of those who have called me to this service [to preside at a Missionary Meeting], that I am so little fitted for it; but, as I am, they must bear with my infirmities, and pray for me that my faith fail not; and if that prayer be answered, weak as I am, I may yet ‘strengthen (my) brethren.’ Kindest regards to Mrs. Wood.

“I am truly, your obliged friend and servant,

“J. MONTGOMERY.

“Rev. Robert Wood, Leeds.”

Weak as the poet was in body, “the spirit was willing;” and both he and the audience appeared to forget, amidst the fervency of his address, everything but the vast magnitude and the solemn importance of the cause which had brought them together.

We have a memento of his visit to Ockbrook toward the latter end of the year, in the following lines ad-



dressed to his niece, Harriet Montgomery, Nov. 28., with a little volume, entitled the "Adieu."

"Adieu! adieu!—what means adieu?  
My soul 'to God' commending you.  
Then 't is the dearest, sweetest word,  
Love ever spoke or ever heard;  
And tho' but used when meetings cease,  
And friend from friend departs in peace;  
That sweetest, dearest word would tell  
Not less for *welcome* than *farewell*.  
Wherefore, whene'er we meet or part,  
The salutation of my heart,  
Through life, in death, shall be for you,  
My brother's child, adieu! adieu!

"And O! when partings are unknown,  
Once and for ever near the throne,  
Should you, at our Redeemer's feet,  
My long-departed spirit meet,  
My greeting still shall be to you,  
In heaven itself, adieu! adieu!"

In the course of this year, a few intelligent individuals in the vicinity of Wath, where Montgomery spent some time in early life, commenced the publication of a "Village Magazine." Pleading the claim of *genius loci*, the editor solicited a contribution from the pen of the Sheffield poet, who forwarded a translation from the Italian of Manfredi's Sonnet "For a Nun," accompanied by a long and curious note descriptive of a remarkable coincidence between an imagined case of peril included in the poem and a real incident of African life.\* He also composed the "Stanzas in Memory of the Rev. James Harvey," for a celebra-

\* Works, p. 364. "The authority of this African adventure, which I believe was first related in 'Barrow's Travels,' was confirmed to me by the Rev. Barnabas Shaw, the admirable Wesleyan mis-



tion of the virtues and talents of this amiable clergyman at the village of Weston Favell in Northamptonshire.\* “Time; a Rhapsody,”† was written *impromptu* in a large volume on Chronology, which the poet gave to the library of the Dissenters’ Academy at Masborough. To these productions of 1833 may be added the verses in Memory of Mrs. Bowden of Hull‡; and several occasional hymns; including this “On laying the Foundation of a Church,” and not elsewhere in print:—

“ Thus saith the high and lofty One,  
 Inhabiting Eternity:  
 ‘ Earth is my footstool, Heaven my throne,  
 What temple will ye build to me ?’  
 Yet mortals, bound by time and space,  
 May plead thy faithful promise, Lord,  
 To bless and hallow every place  
 Where they thy holy Name record.  
 Here then, where none hath stood before,  
 To Thee a House of Prayer we build ;  
 May it, till seasons change no more,  
 Be with thy grace and glory filled.  
 From age to age, the Gospel here  
 Its life, its health, its power impart,  
 Be preached to every listening ear,  
 And sown in every fruitful heart.  
 So, in the heavenly Church above,  
 When saints their course on earth review,  
 Thousands may tell, with joy and love,  
 That here their souls were born anew.”

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sionary in Namaqua Land, of whom I inquired concerning it, and who said that he had met with several individuals who were acquainted with the man himself who had been thus chased, and miraculously rescued ‘from the paw of the lion.’” — *Vill. Mag.*

\* Works, p. 343.

† Ibid. p. 329.

‡ Ibid. p. 350.

## CHAP. LXXI.

1834.

CAUSES OF LOCAL EXCITEMENT.—LETTER TO THE REV. SAMUEL DUNN. —THOUGHTS OF VISITING AMERICA. — LETTER TO GEORGE BENNET. — CONVERSATION. — “THE DEITY,” A POEM. — LETTER TO THOMAS RAGG. — TO THE REV. J. CROWTHER. — TO MISS SHEPHERD. — ABO-LITION OF SLAVERY. — THE FIRST OF AUGUST. — MONTGOMERY’S SONGS AND ADDRESSES ON THE OCCASION. — LETTER TO MRS. ASHLEY. — TO MISS SARAH GALES. — THE CUTLERS’ FEAST. — CHOLERA MONUMENT. — MINOR POEMS. — A “FRAGMENT.”

THREE occasions of local excitement occurred during the first month of the present year, in each of which Montgomery felt himself particularly concerned, not merely as a private citizen, but as one who had exercised, and was still held to possess, great influence on public opinion, viz.: 1. The violent advocacy in the pulpit, and at a public meeting by the Baptist and Independent denominations, of what were called, in a memorial to Earl Grey, “The Dissenters’ claims,” which led to corresponding addresses and meetings in favour of “the Established Church.” In these movements, our friend not only felt that he could not take any active part, but he more especially lamented those wounds which Christian charity was receiving from the acrimonious spirit of the leaders in a conflict as unprofitable as it was unseemly. 2. The formation of the Sheffield “Anti-Corn-Law Society,” while it did not actually introduce anything like hostility between the poet and the bulk of his respectable townspeople,

nevertheless exposed him to the imputation of lukewarmness in the cause of the poor; for decidedly as his sympathies were with the Free Traders in the abstract, he shrunk from personally mixing with a class of agitators whose violence of language is curiously illustrated in the contemporary "Rhymes" of their laureate leader Ebenezer Elliott. 3. But the movement that perplexed him most at this time, and wounded him still more afterwards, was the sudden formation of a new Gas Company in opposition to that over which he presided, and the shares of which had not only been often sold for nearly treble their original cost, but whose committee, by their declaration of an extravagant dividend, contrary to the earnest warning of their chairman, had thus stimulated into life a rival body of shareholders, destined to compel in the end amalgamation of interests and profits.

*James Montgomery to the Rev. Samuel Dunn.\**

"Hartshead, Jan. 31. 1834.

"REV. AND DEAR SIR,

"I thank you for the gift of your sermon on the Witness of the Spirit. It is a very able train of argument in favour of a doctrine which cannot be disproved, though many difficulties occur with respect to the interpretation of what is *the mode* in which that witness is certified to the believer, or in which he receives it, and knows 'the sign infallible.' My own mind has been much, and often, and painfully exercised concerning that evidence so desirable so necessary for inward peace, and a good hope through grace. After all, each must have the witness in himself:

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\* Mr. Dunn was at this period one of the Wesleyan preachers stationed in Sheffield. He was expelled the Connexion at the Conference of 1849, along with Messrs. Everett and Griffith; and afterwards became the minister of an Independent congregation.

‘God is his own interpreter’ here, as in other secret things, ‘and he will make it plain.’ But the experience of one man can be of no more avail to another than confirming the testimony of all who have in every age professed to enjoy it, — that there is such a thing. The Scripture, of course, decides the question as to the fact; — I am alluding to the evidence of it, whether I, for myself, have obtained that mercy or not. It is indeed, and must be in every case, like the possession of that ‘white stone,’ in which ‘a new name is written, that no man knoweth, saving he who receiveth it.’ And this stone is given by Him who sends the Comforter from the Father to those who are adopted, through faith in Him, into the family of God. My heart’s desire and prayer for myself is, that as conviction of sin, godly sorrow, repentance, and faith, are all most unquestionably wrought in me by the Holy Spirit of God, He may also not let me rest satisfied with less assurance of being pardoned, accepted in the Beloved, and sanctified, than the Scriptures warrant me to expect, and consequently render it imperative upon me, at the peril of my soul and salvation, to ask and to seek, that I may receive and find.

“I must leave these few imperfect intimations of what has been and is to me a source of much spiritual conflict, as ‘one of little faith.’\* ”

“You who are strong will know how to pity, and perhaps to bear with my infirmity; which I might call my besetting sin, were it not that so many others might dispute its claim to that distinction.

“I have no more doubt of the communion of the ‘Holy Ghost’ than I have of ‘the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,’ ”

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\* In order to an efficient belief in Christianity, a man must have been a Christian; and this is the seeming *argumentum in circulo*, incident to all spiritual truths, to every subject not presentable under the forms of time and space, as long as we attempt to master, by the reflex acts of the understanding, what we can only *know* by the act of *becoming*. “Do the will of my Father, and ye shall know whether I am of God.” — Coleridge’s *Biog. Liter.* vol. ii. p. 303.

or 'the love of the Father;' but I do not enjoy it as I ought, as I might, and as I pray daily that I may. I hail them blessed of the Lord who do so, and who believe with the heart *fully* unto righteousness.

"I am very truly,

"Your obliged friend and servant,

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"The Rev. J. Dunn, near Carver Street Chapel."

If it be thought extraordinary that Mr. Gales never visited England after his retreat to America in 1793,—and the more so, as he lived to an advanced age, when the facilities of intercourse between his adopted and his native country were so remarkably developed,—it will hardly be surprising that the idea of a transatlantic trip should sometimes have crossed the mind, even if it had never mingled with the hopes, of his friend and successor at Sheffield. There had, indeed, long before this period, existed a threefold reason why Montgomery should listen favourably to proposals to visit the United States:—in the first place, he was aware how cordially he would be welcomed by the gentleman above named, and by every member of his family; then his reputation as a Christian poet might be almost said to be as distinctly recognised in the principal cities of the Union as in Great Britain itself; to which may be added the natural desire which he might reasonably entertain to witness the geographical aspect—the social, political, and religious institutions—of a country which seemed to have conferred on him a citizenship of literature, hardly less specific than that of political status enjoyed by his patriotic predecessor. To these obvious and general reasons, a formal inducement was now presented by the zeal and kindness of his friend Mr. Bennet, who not only offered himself as a *compagnon de voyage*, but liberally anticipated the possibility of pecuniary ob-

jection. These remarks will render intelligible some allusions in the following letter:—

*James Montgomery to George Bennet.*

“Sheffield, Feb. 13. 1834.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,

“What shall I say to your proposal?—That which I think you must have anticipated, though you kindly hoped that I would not avail myself of the plea to deny myself the happiness which you so disinterestedly invite me to partake. Frankly, however, I will meet you,—the delicacy, the manliness, and the generosity of your overture I deeply feel, and shall remain your debtor so long as I live, for the opportunity which it has given me of seeing you in so noble and amiable a light. But so am I circumstanced, that if I could consent to the sacrifice on your part, which you are willing to make for my gratification and benefit, neither my health nor the posture of some of my private affairs would allow me to take advantage of so favourable an opportunity of knowing you yet better than I even do now, which the changes and chances (to use a phrase hardly Christian in the latter word) of voyaging and journeying in your company would afford. Were I so situated that I could leave England at this time, and pay a visit for a few months to the United States, I would both gladly and thankfully avail myself of being your companion, if you were so inclined, without putting you to any other expense than bearing with my infirmities, and setting me, under all circumstances, an example of faith, patience, brotherly kindness, and charity in all its forms, as occasion might require. But I am at best a ‘bruised reed,’ not yet ‘broken,’ and my spirit but as ‘smoking flax,’ not yet ‘quenched;’ therefore utterly unfit for an adventure so exhilarating to a young and ardent mind. . . . My dear friend, I am now speaking from my heart, and I have gone to the bottom of it to bring up these confessions [of early unfaithfulness to God, and to his own interests] to you in sincerity and truth,—not from false humility,—as specimens of that ‘bitterness’ of *mine* which



no *other* heart *can* know, and which words cannot otherwise communicate than in such generalities as the aforementioned, and then referring the friend to whom the disclosure is made to the incommunicable secrets of his own, for which (if he be a Christian, or only desires to be one) he goes softly all his days, mourning over them with that godly sorrow which worketh repentance unto salvation. Again accept my cordial thanks for your offer, and the assurance of the sincere esteem and respect of

“Your old friend,

“J. MONTGOMERY.

“George Bennet, Esq., Tryon’s Place, Hackney.”

Feb. 16. Mr. Everett being on a visit to the poet for three or four days, we took tea and supper with him. He had just received from Dr. Mac‘Ilvaine, Bishop of Ohio, U.S., a volume of religious lectures, one of which, at his request, Mr. Holland read aloud as a suitable part of the Sunday evening’s exercise. He was himself reading Wesley’s Journals: in the first volume there are some hard things said of the Moravians of that day. “These passages,” Montgomery remarked, “ought to have been omitted in reprinting the work: at best, they exhibited only one side of the questions at issue; and these had better have been buried with the combatants themselves. Wesley,” he added, “appears to me, in many respects, one of the clearest thinkers and writers I ever met with. It is amazing how, with such a clear head, and so much apparent coolness of judgment, he should so often seem to approach the verge of fanaticism. He was born to rule, as evidently as he was gifted to teach.” He objected to the fondness manifested by some preachers to indulge in exaggerated descriptions of the sufferings of Christ, under the notion of enhancing the price paid by the Author of our salvation; some of them contending that He endured in his agony all that the lost souls suffer in

perdition; others, that He bore in his own person all that believers would have suffered had He not died for them: he admitted, of course, that the sufferings of the Redeemer were *very great*, and certainly *sufficient*, in relation to the atonement, for the sins of all mankind made by Him who bore our sins; but their *degree*, as nowhere revealed in Scripture, was a mystery beyond our comprehension, and which ought therefore to be left with God. He showed us a poem, entitled “The Deity,” which had just been dedicated to him by Thomas Ragg, a Nottingham weaver. After reading several passages with solemn emphasis, he remarked, that such a work from such a man was not only extraordinary, considering the amount of logical and metaphysical reasoning which was embodied in it in appropriate and often elegant versification, but also for the good sense and good taste—two of the rarest attributes of any poet, and least likely to characterise an uneducated one—which pervaded the entire production. “But even this poem,” he added, “deserving as it does to rank with Pollok’s ‘Course of Time,’ will soon, in these times, like *that*, be comparatively forgotten amid the crowd of fresh and more popular, though not more elaborate, productions.” The following letter, written some months afterwards, shows that the poem had undergone his revision in manuscript:—

*James Montgomery to Thomas Ragg.*

“Sheffield, Sept. 26. 1834.

“DEAR SIR,

“I was very glad to see your poem in its book-form, and to read it with so much more ease to myself, and advantage to the author, in fair printed pages, than when I travelled through it in manuscript, with weary eyes, by candle-light chiefly, and while I was suffering from a sharp disease that scarcely allowed me any use of legs but what might be

indulged in bed or upon a sofa. If, under such circumstances, I found many painful hours delightfully employed, in proportion as I diligently and resolutely stuck to the task of perusal for the express purpose of discovering faults, that they might be corrected, you may judge how abundantly I have been compensated by reading the poem in its improved form as to external appearance, and, I think, in some respects amended as to its internal reality, when I had little else to do (and certainly desired to do nothing else) but to descry its beauties and dwell on its severer excellences. Many volumes of poetry have been dedicated to me since I appeared myself in the character of a versifier, but, excepting the first (the ‘Associate Minstrels,’ by the Taylors of Ongar and their friends), it is no disparagement of the rest to say that this ‘excelleth them all.’ Without being consciously blind to any of its deficiencies, I cannot hesitate *now* to say to you, that, if mere merit in the display of original genius, and learning of a very abstruse and not very poetical kind, were to be considered, I might be tempted to hazard my reputation (as a critic at least) by saying, that no poem equal to it has been given to the public since the ‘Course of Time,’ and it is only inferior to *that* (which by the by has many grievous faults, that may be pardoned, not redeemed, for the sake of its strange but transcendent excellences), in proportion as your education and extrinsic hinderances to the full development of your powers have been inferior to the admirable but eccentric Pollok’s. As I found that my strictures on the work in its manuscript state hurt your feelings more than they were intended to do (indeed they were not more intended to hurt them than the surgeon’s most delicate but decisive strokes are inflicted to torture his patient), I hope you will forgive me both for the pain in that instance, — which I trust you have proved to be salutary in rousing you to do better than what you thought was your best before in revising the poem, — and also the pain which the above strong testimony of my sense of the worth of the finished performance may cause to your modesty, in your own estimate of the same. . . . Go on and prosper, in consecrating yourself and all your powers to the God who

gave them, and who will give more grace in proportion as you improve what you have already received.

“ I am, very truly, your friend and servant,

“ J. MONTGOMERY.

“ Mr. Thomas Ragg, New Lenton, Nottingham.”

Of the two following letters it will be sufficient to say, that the first is in reply to one of those numerous applications for original verses to be sold at bazaars, which constantly taxed either his poetical or his apologetic ingenuity: the second refers to an invitation to attend a Wesleyan missionary meeting at Manchester, which had been addressed to him by the secretary:—

*James Montgomery to Miss Shepherd.*

“ Sheffield, Feb. 17. 1834.

“ DEAR MADAM,

“ I am so unwell that I can only hastily say that I am sorry that I cannot comply with a request so natural and reasonable for you to make; but from peculiar personal considerations — one of which is that such applications are so frequent that I should not know where to limit compliance without giving offence — I am compelled, except in some very extraordinary cases, to decline at once any attempt to please any friend on similar occasions. Explanation of my other motives might be unsatisfactory to you, but they are imperative restraints upon myself, and quite justifiable in the Court of Conscience, and in the judgment of Charity. If you think that the publication on cards or embossed paper of the stanzas which you mentioned\* would serve the cause which you so earnestly and worthily advocate, you are quite welcome to them. I believe I may safely give them this recommendation (no very high one, indeed), that they are better in themselves, and, from the spirited measure in which they are written, and the boldness as well as

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\* “ Blow ye the trumpet abroad o’er the sea,” &c. — *Works*, p. 252.

brevity with which the subject is handled, much more likely to take with the public than anything which my weary mind could produce under its present prostration of energy, on a subject which has long ago exhausted its principal resources of sentiment and illustration.\* Forgive me for not being able, though well inclined to do all, and more than all, you have asked. 'The good Lord bless you,' and 'the work of your hands,' may 'He prosper it!'

"I am, truly, your friend and servant,

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"Miss Shepherd, Oxford Road, Manchester."

*James Montgomery to the Rev. J. Crowther.*

"Sheffield, Feb. 17. 1834.

"DEAR FRIEND,

"Mr. Everett can tell you that I am but dust and ashes, which no wind is likely to blow over the moors towards Manchester at the time and on the occasion you mention. Were I ever so well able otherwise to answer your call, I have *three* annual engagements every Easter Monday to detain me here, and 'a threefold cord is not soon broken.' Five or six and twenty chimney sweepers' lads hold one of the twines; I know not how many London missionaries another; and, for aught I can tell, millions of heathen, among whom these labour, the third. In plain English, I have to attend a public missionary breakfast in the morning, and an anniversary meeting in the evening,—with the refreshing interlude of a dinner on roast beef and plum pudding, which for a *quarter of a century* a few of us have given to the climbing-boys of Sheffield.

"If I had the wings of a dove and the spirit of an eagle, I might perhaps fly over the space between, and alight among you in Oldham Street on Tuesday evening; but alas! I have not a feather about me (except that on which I am now astride, and flying to meet your eye in the shape of a letter), and I am lame in both legs. Hoofs and wheels,

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\* How entirely was this sentiment reversed on the appearance of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" twenty years afterwards.

indeed, might whirl me over the mountains and through the valleys in time to convince you that I had better have stayed at home, than perilled my health, and cast away my credit, to oblige you, by an impotent exertion in a cause which requires all the best powers of the best man in his best state to honour even in a humble degree. You ask me so gently, that to refuse costs me more pain than you could wish me to suffer as a penalty for perversity instead of inability. I am sure you would forgive me if you could see how poor a creature I am. I can add nothing but my best respects to your Missionary Committee, with my sincere and fervent prayer for such a blessing at your meeting as there shall not be room to hold; but it will *make* room, even if it expanded every heart among you to take in the whole world,—and less hearts will not do for missionary work.

“I am, very truly, your friend and servant,

“JAMES MONTGOMERY.

“The Rev. Mr. Crowther, Manchester.”

“May the time come—at least the speculation to me is pleasing—when the sable people shall gratefully commemorate the auspicious era of extensive freedom!” Thus wrote, in 1790, the civilised and Christianised negro, Gustavus Vasa\*, a man whose intelligence was, or ought to have been, more than sufficient to dissipate the blatant allegations of African imbecility. Montgomery, in his address at the public dinner given to him in Sheffield, November 4. 1825, turning to Lord Milton, the president, said, “I sang the abolition of the Slave Trade, that most glorious decree of the British Legislature, at any period since the Revolution, by the first parliament in which you, my lord, sat as

\* The life of this individual, as written by himself, is a curious record of the progress of a single human mind from the lowest degree of barbarian ignorance to intelligence and worth, and of the sufferings and injustice to which blacks were everywhere exposed at the period to which it refers.



the representative of Yorkshire. Oh! how I should rejoice to sing the abolition of slavery itself by some parliament of which your lordship shall be a member!"\* These fervent aspirations were realised on the 1st of August this year.†

The British Act for the Abolition of Slavery received the Royal assent August 28. 1833. It was afterwards "amended"—*i. e.* adopted—by the House of Assembly in Jamaica.‡ By it slavery was abolished in that as in our other colonies: a state of apprenticeship was substituted—of four years for negroes employed as house servants, and six years for predials, or those employed in field labour—all children being declared free at once: the intention of the legislature being that slavery was absolutely to cease in 1840. Of the two features of the bill which produced so much excitement and discussion at the time,—*viz.*, the plan of apprenticeship, and the pecuniary compensation of the slaveholders,—it may

\* It was in the Upper House, however, that his lordship bore his part in carrying the Emancipation Act, having taken his place as a peer on the death of Earl Fitzwilliam, Feb. 8. 1833, a fortnight after the announcement of the intention of ministers in the King's speech on the opening of parliament.

† This was not the only First of August which the annals of Freedom record as a day of grateful commemoration. In 1853 it was distinguished, in Plymouth, Mass., U. S., by a grand public fête, as the anniversary of the day when the "Pilgrim Fathers," the founders of the colony, took their departure from the haven of Delft in Holland, for England, there to embark on board the "May Flower," to establish a home and church for themselves in the New World, A.D. 1620.

‡ A description of the appearance of the Assembly at the moment of the passing of the act alluded to may be found in the "Wesleyan Methodist Magazine" for Nov. 1853, under the head of "Scenes in the Caribbean." It was written by an eye-witness, and exhibits a power of graphic delineation worthy of the pen of Sir Walter Scott himself.

be sufficient here to remark that the former had the concurrence of many good men, including Montgomery himself; while of the latter, if the same cannot be said, the sacrifice of twenty millions sterling on the altar of Christian benevolence was an act of magnanimous generosity —

“Beyond all Greek, beyond all Roman fame,”

and which Christian England alone, at such a crisis, and for such a cause, had nobly dared to perform.

As might be expected, the 1st of August was a day of triumph and of gratitude with the friends of humanity in Great Britain, as well as with the negroes in the colonies. The muse of Montgomery was gladly and effectively invoked on the occasion; and his five spirited “Songs on the Abolition of Negro Slavery in the British Colonies” \* were sung not only at different meetings in the metropolis, but through the length and breadth of the land. The poet himself took personally an active part in the festival proceedings at Sheffield. In the forenoon the children belonging to the Lancastrian schools—nearly a thousand boys and girls—assembled to sing two of the hymns and listen to an address from him. The writer of these pages was present on the occasion, and still remembers the predominant sentiment which the appearance of these boys and girls forcibly impressed, that, throughout the whole extent of the British empire from and after the morning of yesterday, at least, there would be no more children born or made slaves; and that so far the Emancipation Bill had abated the effect of the following verse from one of the best known and most exquisitely simple and touching “Hymns for Infant Minds” in our language, and in which the child is made to acknowledge the

\* Works, p. 252.

happier place and circumstances of its birth, among other mercies, in these words:—

“I was not born a little slave  
To labour in the sun,  
And wish I was but in my grave,  
And all my labours done.”

It so happened that the hundreds of youthful voices within the school were raised to their full pitch in singing the above verse as Mr. Montgomery entered the yard; and he afterwards declared to the children that he should never forget the effect which the sounds that then saluted his ears had made upon his heart. It was, he said, on various accounts, a joyous morning with him: he was glad to perceive that it was a joyous morning with those before him, who had earnestly thanked God that they had not been born slaves; and he could assure them that it was the most joyous morning which had shone upon the children of the West Indies for the last three hundred years; and the happiest circumstance of all was, that never more to the end of time should another child be born a slave throughout the British empire.

In the evening Montgomery presided at a meeting, where about five hundred Christian friends, after taking tea together, listened to an address even more fervent and animating than that which had delighted the children in the morning. We may perpetuate in this page the substance of a single passage. Holding in his hand a large printed label with the words, “Slavery abolished, August 1. 1834. Thank God!” the speaker said, “To God our thanks were especially due on this occasion for the glorious event He had wrought; for the Abolition of Slavery was not attributable either to patriots, politicians, or to poets, but to Christians, in

their character as such ; and especially was it to the successful efforts of the missionaries of religion that the negroes had been prepared in some degree for these blessings of freedom which could no longer be withheld. It was," added Montgomery, " chiefly owing to Satan having ensnared himself in his own toils, that the emancipation of the negroes resulted just now—his emissaries objecting to the preaching of the Gospel among the coloured people on various estates, lest they should attain that knowledge which their masters despised, and by this means pass them by in morals and manners, at length asserted in so many words the great truth, that Slavery and Christianity could not exist together. That very sentiment was the death knell of slavery : from the moment that expression was uttered, it was no longer a question, in heaven or upon earth, whether or not slavery should perish. Slavery, so far as Great Britain is concerned, has perished ; and from this day another slave destined for our colonies shall never cross that ocean, from whose mysterious depths, hundreds, and probably thousands, who have been thrown overboard during the horrible " middle passage," shall rise up at the last trump, perhaps crying for mercy upon those who showed no mercy to the victims of their cupidity and their cruelty."\*

\* Coincidentally with these national rejoicings in commemoration of the abolition of slavery appeared an elegant little volume, entitled "The Bow in the Cloud; or, the Negro's Memorial." Although published anonymously, it may here be mentioned, that the eighty names affixed to the contributions in "prose and verse" were mostly those of personal friends of the editor, Mrs. Rawson, of Wincobank Hall, near Sheffield. The first twenty pages are devoted to an article from the pen of Montgomery, entitled "Leonard Dober," an account of the introduction of the gospel among negro slaves in the West Indies, by Moravian missionaries to the Danish island of St. Thomas ; where, for a time, they suffered cruel per-

*James Montgomery to Mrs. Ashby.*

“ Sheffield, August 12. 1834.

“ DEAR MADAM,

“ I do not know whether you will say ‘ better late than never,’ when you read the signature to this sheet. On the receipt of your communication I should have said so, if it had been in my power to return a satisfactory answer : it had been detained or loitered full four weeks after its date. Had you committed it to a carrier pigeon, or even a carrier post, it would have come duly I doubt not, and left me without excuse if I had not promptly and fervently fulfilled the desire of the writer, by pouring out my first and best thoughts on the noble theme proposed to me for verse. But in truth, before your letter came to my hands, they had already grown weary in the work of which this was to set me a fresh task. I had composed five different pieces at the request of various parties for the occasion of the First of August ; three of these have been published in what, for a while at least, will be permanent forms, and two others (which I transcribe) had been very extensively printed for the use of meetings on that day, both in London and the country. These labours had so far exhausted the stock of my few remaining ideas on the subject (after having written, sung, and spoken upon it with all my heart and all my powers for nearly forty years) that I had no spirit left to achieve further victories over my natural indolence, and what I think my justifiable reluctance to wring my mind out to the dregs on a subject which (inexhaustible perhaps in itself) I had wrought upon in every form that passion, fancy, virtue, and religion, so far as these may influence me, could devise, or inspire, or enforce. I did not, however, give up

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secution ; but as early as 1739 a royal ordonnance was issued at Copenhagen, securing liberty and protection to the preachers. Dr. Madden says (vol. ii. p. 128.), “ To the honour of Denmark be it spoken, the slave trade was abolished by her five years before England performed that act of tardy justice to humanity.”

without a struggle: I made two or three efforts, but could not produce anything which I thought worthy of the particular view of the subject which you recommended; and I could not dishonour it, or disappoint you by common-place lines.

“I am respectfully, your friend and servant,

“J. MONTGOMERY.

“Mrs. Ashby, Staines, Middlesex.”

*James Montgomery to Miss Gales.*

“Sheffield, August 21. 1834.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,

“These pretty birds found their way into our house this morning, before I was down stairs. Whether they came on wings or legs I am not prepared to say from anything that I can learn from themselves, neither of them having spoken a word since their arrival. I rather think they came by *hands*, our neighbour Hawksworth’s compliments having accompanied them. Now as thousands of their kind have been travelling day and night in all directions since the 12th of August, as messengers of good will to distant friends, your sister and I thought that the best use we could make of them would be—they having duly delivered their message to us—to forward them on a similar errand to you, as tokens of our best regards, and daily remembrance of you during your temporary absence. We hope that you arrived at Buxton at least as well as you set out, though that indeed was very indifferent, and I am afraid the damp, dark morning would rather depress than exhilarate your spirits. However, as I am sure you would meet with sympathising friends and a ready welcome at the far end, and as the rain and gloom have not been continual, but happily broken by lucid intervals of sunshine and a few glimpses of harvest moonlight, we cheer ourselves with the idea—which we shall be glad to find realised under your own hand when you write—that, better than all your fears, have you found your change from the city of soot to the



Paradise of the Peak to be, in the improvement of your health, and the relief which you have already received from the distressing symptoms of your complaint. Now this we are determined to believe till (may it never happen!) we hear to the contrary.

“I have no news to communicate except what you anticipated before you went. Miss Willey and her brother set out on their tour the same morning as you did; but Miss Bailey, for some reason or other, did not, though I believe she left Burngreave the following day.

“After you were gone I was sorry that I did not give you, as a daily companion, our Text Book. I enclose a copy which will speak comfortably to you in the words of eternal life, whenever you look into it; and, as a morning and an evening star, the two texts of each day will shine from heaven, yea from the heaven of heavens, upon your mind, both when you rise up and when you lie down. That in the second part, on the day when you left us, was particularly encouraging, and I trust that you have found it fulfilled to yourself every hour since it was spoken to each of us, but to you especially, at our breakfast table on the 18th of August. [John xiv. 18.] We shall be very glad to hear from you as soon as it is convenient for you to write a few lines. Present my most grateful remembrance to the kind friends in whose society you are; may they have their reward—yes, and they will have it—sevenfold in their own bosoms for all the good offices they show to you! Your sister sends her best love.

“I am, very truly, your affectionate friend,

“J. MONTGOMERY.

“Miss Gales, Buxton.”

On the 4th of September Montgomery was present at the Cutlers' Feast, when he spoke at considerable length—too long in the opinion of some of the guests who had no sympathy with the politics of Wentworth House—in testimony of the virtues of the late Earl Fitzwilliam, and by way of inaugurating a marble bust

of that nobleman, which the speaker, in the name of himself and his fellow-subscribers, had just placed in the Cutlers' Hall. A few weeks afterwards, at an anniversary dinner of the Infirmary, where Lord Wharncliffe presided, he adverted to the antiquity of the local connection between the name of Wortley and the district of Hallamshire; and especially to the obligation under which the town of Sheffield was laid to the present head of the family as a kind neighbour and a respected magistrate.

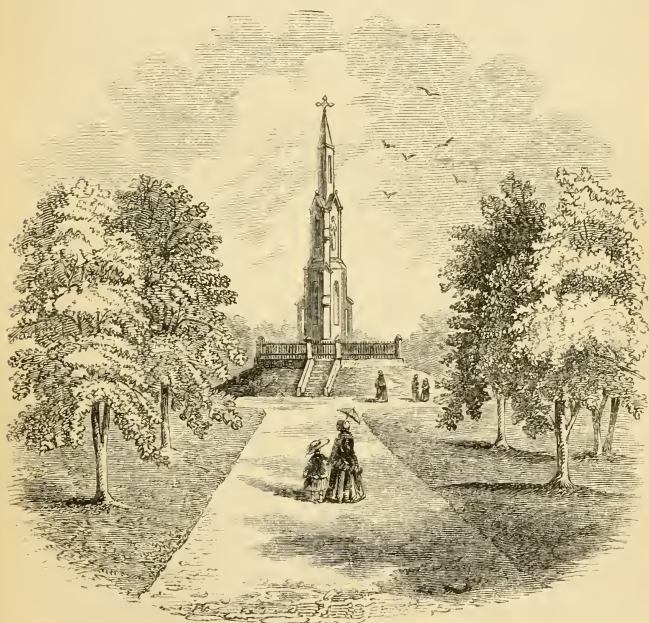
A copy of "The Sand and the Rock," sent by the poet to his friend Mr. Edwards of Derby, bears the following note:—

"Ockbrook, Dec. 8. 1834.

"If you say what signifies *a date* to so small a memorial of our friendship, I answer that it signifies all that happened on that day throughout the world, to all that lived and moved and had a being then and there; — it signifies more, more, more — much more; it signifies all that happened throughout the whole creation of God during twenty-four hours, and that is more than all created beings themselves could comprehend while it was passing, for it includes all the counsels and works in sovereignty and grace of the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the blessed and only Potentate, during such portion of his own eternity. This is speaking after the manner of men, for to divide even in imagination the *unbegun* existence of Deity, is like making a map of infinite space, and arranging it in geographical sections, or measuring out the apparent limits of an artificial system of constellations, when their actual relative positions are utterly beyond the scope of human optics to discover."

Dec. 11. This day, the corner stone of the Monumental Cross on the Cholera Burial Ground, at Claywood, was laid in the presence of Michael Ellison, Esq., as agent to the Duke of Norfolk, Mr. M. E. Hadfield,

the architect, and other persons, by Mr. Montgomery, the Chairman of the late Board of Health, who, placing in the cavity prepared for it a glass bottle containing a particular record of the disease in 1832, said, "In the name of God our Father, of Jesus Christ our only Lord and Saviour, and of the Holy Spirit, our guide and comforter, I deposit this memorial of an awful visitation of sickness throughout this town and neighbourhood, which was accompanied, nevertheless, with many



MORTUARY CROSS, CLAY WOOD, SHEFFIELD.

gracious manifestations of Divine mercy." At the close of the usual operations of lowering, levelling, and settling the stone, the architect said to Mr. Montgomery, "I hope, sir, your work of this day will be

permanent." He replied, " May it stand till the day of resurrection!" This monument, which terminates an avenue of trees in front of the Shrewsbury Hospital, and forms a very conspicuous feature in the scenery, consists of an elegant shaft, rising from a triangular base, and having a cruciform termination.\*

Mr. Everett having resumed his duties as an itinerant Wesleyan preacher, and being this year "stationed" at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, wrote to Montgomery, inviting him to attend a missionary meeting in that town some time during the ensuing spring. In his reply, dated Dec. 20. 1834, the poet said :—

" I will frankly make the only promise that I can, at present, shackled as it must be with an indispensable condition. Either in the first or second week of April, if it please the Lord to grant me health and strength and a sound mind, I will pray Him to make my way clear to Newcastle, and in that case your friends may expect to see me, and I will place myself in their hands to make the best use they can of me. But the condition to which I allude is this : that if there be any misunderstanding between the Methodist congregations at the chapels which you name, respecting the appropriation of missionary collections, I must be absolved from the obligation of taking part in the proceedings, as I have fully made up my mind not to implicate myself at home or abroad with any controversies in the Connexion. You will duly appreciate my motives in this respect, and therefore I shall say no more, but wait till I hear further, or when your committee have determined upon the precise time of holding the meetings. Give my kindest regards to them all.

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\* In the hurricane of January 7. 1839, which otherwise did considerable damage in the neighbourhood, the upper portion of the shaft was blown down ; it was soon afterwards restored. Montgomery has two sonnets, composed on visiting the scene of devastation.—*Works*, p. 339.

“Now I may congratulate you on your release from secular business, because I am sure you would no more have run from that, uncalled, to the Lord’s service, than you would have left the latter (I mean as a stated minister) if He, in his providence, had not afflicted you with an infirmity which compelled your retirement for a season. I hope, therefore, you are again come forth like a giant refreshed with new wine — ‘the wine of the kingdom,’ which our Saviour himself drank ‘new’ after He had wrung to the dregs that cup of wrath without mixture which we must have been draining to eternity, yet never found it diminished by a drop. Long and faithfully, and happily for yourself and successfully for his cause, may you ‘travel on in the greatness of *his* strength!’ I believe the Conference is to be held in Sheffield next year. If I have a home here then, remember it will be yours during your visit; and to secure you by an obligation which you cannot well escape, I accept, as cordially as it has been given, your own offer of hospitality, should I be privileged to reach Newcastle at the missionary time.”

Besides the Hymns on the Abolition of Slavery, he wrote this year, “Worms and Flowers;” “Speed the Prow;” “The Fixed Stars;” “The Sun Flower;” “Winter Lightning;” “The Veil;” and “A Certain Disciple,” the Rev. and Ven. William Marsh, of Colchester. These occasional pieces were all subsequently revised, and published by the author in his collected Works.\* We have before us a Fragment of Verses entitled “What may have been,” and dated 1834†: it

\* Pages 331. 333—336. 344. 365.

† The spirited lines, entitled “Farewell to War,” and prefixed to the later editions of “Falkland’s Dream,” were also written this year. Mr. Bennet entered heartily into the spirit and operations of the “Peace Societies,” in the cause of which he probably deemed his friend less zealous; for the latter justified himself both in prose and rhyme. “Moravians,” said Montgomery, in a letter to Mr. Bennet, June 19., “are men of peace by the very constitution



has never before appeared in print, and is evidently an introspection of the early and unsettled period of the poet's life : —

“In visions of the night I lay  
Unslumbering on my lonely bed ;  
Night is the spirit's own free day,  
When the broad scenes of sense are fled,  
And in the mind's unbodied sphere,  
A point, yet infinite in space !  
The thronging stars of thought appear,  
Unruled by time, unfixed to place :  
But as they rise and set, are still  
Called forth, detained, dismissed at will.

“Then, with the eye that looks on things  
Invisible to earthly gaze,  
And from the depth of Memory brings  
The shadows of departed days,  
I witnessed what I here indite, —  
No fictions, idle ears to please,  
But what have seen and passed the light  
Between the two eternities,  
Whose borders formed life's slender stream,  
As eve and morn, a midnight dream.”

[The two preceding stanzas are marked for deletion with a pencil in the original, and the subject continued under the title of a “ Fragment of a Life.”]

“I saw a mother and her child, —  
A spectacle of every day !  
As many a mother smiles, she smiled,  
He played as any child might play ;

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of their church ; and I am as much, I would fain hope, a man of peace as yourself.” He might have added, that the Brethren were exempted by law from being compelled to bear arms.



Yet was her heart so full, she turned  
To him who owned a Father's name,  
And while her cheek, all rosy, burned,  
Cried, 'May he never come to shame!'  
Her words were oracles, long years  
Have solved the riddle of her fears.

"I saw a cowering, listening boy,  
All eye and wonder at the tale  
Told by a beldame, while the joy  
Of terror flushed him red and pale:  
As in the tulip's folded root,  
Are stem, leaf, bud, and blossom found,  
So youth and age, hope's flowers and fruit,  
The man within the infant bound,  
Throbbled to break loose, but throbbled in vain,  
Till link by link time loosed the chain.

"I saw a group of schoolmates climb  
A roofless abbey's mouldering walls \*;  
One stood alone, in trance sublime,  
O'er pillared aisles and sculptured halls,  
What were to him those old grey stones?  
Parents of feeling undefined;  
As turning up the mighty bones  
Of warriors, fires the ploughman's mind  
With thoughts of battle-fields that make  
His heart new born for glory's sake.

"I saw a youth amidst the tide  
Of city-life, that ever rolls,  
Wave urging wave, from side to side,  
A soul among a million souls:

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\* This stanza doubtless refers to Kirkstall Abbey, which, as elsewhere mentioned, the boys sometimes visited, in company with their teachers, from Fulneck School. Tradition attributed to it the scene of Southey's ballad of "Mary the Maid of the Inn."

By none acknowledged, knowing none,  
Homeless and hopeless, yet a spark,  
The latest of a secret flame,  
He deeply cherish'd in the dark,  
Nameless, to leave a deathless name ;  
He slept and dreamed his dream anew,  
Years passed — he woke — and found it true !

“ March, 1834.”

## CHAP. LXXII.

1835.

GENERAL ELECTION. — LETTER TO JOHN BLACKWELL. — MEMOIRS OF DANTE AND ARIOSTO. — LETTER TO GEORGE BENNET. — INSCRIPTION FOR MONUMENT OF LORD DE DUNSTANVILLE. — THE "POET'S PORTFOLIO." — MINOR PIECES. — MONTGOMERY VISITS NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE. — RELIGIOUS ENGAGEMENTS THERE. — RECEIVES A NOTIFICATION OF ROYAL PENSION. — OBJECTS OF INTEREST IN THE TOWN. — LETTER TO GEORGE BENNET. — PARTY SPITE. — MONTGOMERY IN LONDON. — DINES AT SIR ROBERT PEEL'S. — DECLINES TO BECOME A CANDIDATE FOR PROFESSORSHIP OF RHETORIC. — LETTERS TO GEORGE BENNET.

THE old year had closed, and the new year opened amidst the din of discordant politics, and the turmoil of a general election. The candidates for Sheffield were John Parker and J. S. Buckingham, the ex-members; and Samuel Bailey, who was merely put forward by some of his friends. On the morning of the nomination (Jan. 8.) Mr. Holland was surprised to see Montgomery on the hustings, with a card in his hat — and still more to learn that he had gone there with the intention of proposing John Parker; but not being satisfied with the private explanation of the candidate relative to the "appropriation clause" of the bill relating to the revenue of the church in Ireland, he had declined the task. On being asked why he had not voted on this as on a former occasion for his friend Mr. Bailey? he replied that he objected to the conduct of the party who had brought forward that gentleman without his concurrence.

*James Montgomery to John Blackwell.*

“Sheffield, Jan. 9. 1835.

“DEAR FRIEND,

“After having been almost worn out in spirit, as well as rendered too nervous to be comfortable, by the number of Christmas festivities which I have been obliged to attend in connection with our various Sunday Schools, &c., I am now involved (though personally very little, yet mentally very much) in the perplexities of electioneering; — a contest having been most unexpectedly excited, which is carried on with an intensity of heat, in proportion as the time is short, and none of the combatants were previously prepared for action. But the ‘*Iris*,’ no doubt, will tell you much more than I know concerning particulars. I lament it on many accounts, — on my own, I may add, because it places my feeling and duties (as I apprehend these) in embarrassing opposition. I have, however, acted according to the latter and overcome the former, at the hazard of displeasing some whom I should have rejoiced to serve. This is the evening of the first day’s poll, and, so far as I have heard of the result, Mr. John Parker is at the head, Mr. Buckingham comes close upon his heels, and Mr. Samuel Bailey not far behind, so that there will probably be a neck-and-neck race to the goal. The decision you will probably know before this hasty scrawl arrives.

“I have to thank you for the kindness of your last letter. In reference to your offer of hospitality, should I visit Newcastle in April, I can only say that on all *such* occasions I place myself at the disposal of the friends who invite me, and quarter myself nowhere without their appointment or consent. This saves both them and myself much trouble, and avoids the chances of offending those good people whom I meet everywhere, who, judging of me by the warmth of their Christian affections, are always willing, and sometimes importunate, to receive me as ‘an angel of God,’ — of course, in the humblest sense in which that Scripture denomination can be applied to a poor breathing form of dust and ashes such

as I am, ready to be dissipated by a breeze, or crushed before the moth. My old friend, Mr. Everett, you may be sure, in enlisting me into his service, claimed possession of all between my hat and my shoes during my sojourn in the north, and I accordingly gave him a promissory note to deliver up the same under his roof should no providential or other event cause me either to stay at home or to travel elsewhere, in this world or the next, at that time. I was not unaware that I had given you something like a reason to calculate on my acceptance of long-ago proffered entertainment at your board should business or pleasure take me into your neighbourhood; . . . and I am sorry to make so many words about so small a matter, but I am concerned both to do right, and to stand right, in your esteem. I have been grieved and deeply sympathise with you and Mrs. Blackwell in the family afflictions which have been sent, — not to harm but to chasten you, in your new and trying situation. . . . The Misses Gales join me in kindest regards to Mrs. B., and congratulations on the happy restoration to health of your family. Long may you all enjoy as much peace and happiness as will confirm you daily in gratitude for a lot so desirable as to have but one drawback, — the danger of withdrawing the heart from the Giver in the enjoyment of the gift ! This I trust will never be your case.

“Believe me ever, truly your friend,

“JAMES MONTGOMERY.

“John Blackwell, Esq., Newcastle.”

The first volume of “Eminent Literary and Scientific Men of Italy, Spain, and Portugal,” which appeared at the beginning of this year in the biographical department of Lardner’s “Cabinet Cyclopaedia,” opened with Montgomery’s Life of Dante, which had long been in the hands of the editor. A poet, a patriot, a man whose genius was identified with the sublimest themes of religion, according to the notions of his own age, while his pages reflect none of its licentiousness, the history of the illustrious Florentine formed a study

congenial to the taste of our friend: and if, in the brief space of sixty pages\*, he cannot be said to have cast any new light on the talents, the fortunes, or the productions of one whose fame had been so often and amply illustrated, he has, at least, placed the remarkable character of his hero in a clear and gratifying point of view. "Among the illustrious fathers of song"—these are the words of the opening sentence—"who, in their own land, cannot cease to exercise dominion over the minds, characters, and destinies of all posterity; and who, beyond its frontiers, must continue to influence the taste and help to form the genius of those who shall exercise like authority in other countries,—Dante Alighieri is, undoubtedly, one of the most remarkable." From this verdict we presume there will be no appeal.

Every reader of the "Divina Commedia" must be aware how much the poet is the hero of his own fiction; albeit "anything but a hero, either in the vulgar or the chivalrous sense of the term. He is a human being, with all the faults, frailties, and imperfections of our common nature, as they really existed in himself, and as they more or less exist in every other person; nor can a less sophisticated character be found in all the volumes of prose and rhyme that have appeared since this autobiographical poem." Hence, it becomes im-

\* Montgomery's remuneration for this memoir of Dante, and for those of Ariosto and Tasso, afterwards mentioned, was half a guinea a page; or at the rate of about 150*l.* per volume. But so costly was the *éclat* which was sought to be given to this "Cyclopædia," by a display of names of the first rank in literature, that Moore and Scott received 1000*l.* per volume for their Histories of Ireland and Scotland respectively; and Sir James Mackintosh 3000*l.* per volume for his History of England.—Moore's *Memoirs*, vol. vi. p. 16.



portant, in order to understand his character aright, not only to collect and apply this evidence,—sometimes obscure enough, even to the Italians themselves,—but, if the biographer of Dante be a foreigner, he must carefully translate it also. How largely Montgomery had qualified himself for his task by the mastery of these essentials of success, may be seen as well from the number of “elegant extracts” embodied in his essay, as from the surplus examples elsewhere preserved.\* The latter, indeed, were designed by the translator to have been appended to his strictures on Dante’s great works, “as specimens of the various kinds of style for which the author was distinguished, and in order to give the English reader some faint idea of this poet’s very peculiar manner of handling his subject, and the general cast of his mind and mode of thinking; but the limits of the present work precluded their insertion.” Of the absolute merit of these specimens we ought, perhaps, to speak with diffidence: but even to readers not intimately conversant with the original text, they convey the idea of being rendered with idiomatic as well as literal exactness; while others, who are better qualified, may compare them with the corresponding passages in Italian, which Montgomery has also printed; or with the translation of “H. F. Cary, which may be said to fail in nothing except the versification.”

The *Life of Ariosto* occupies seventy pages of the same volume of the “*Cyclopædia*,” and exhibits an elegant, succinct, and satisfactory view of the character and writings of the Tuscan poet. The latter include seven satires in the form of epistles; and from these Montgomery, in common with preceding biographers, has drawn largely for the materials of his narrative; and

\* Works, p. 244.

in six or seven instances he has translated the fables, which are often introduced with curious and happy effect in the original text. A single specimen of these, rendered in what the translator terms "slip-shod verse," may be acceptable: —

"Once on a time, — 'twas when the world was young,  
And the first race of men were inexperienced,  
For there were no such knaveries then as now,  
A certain people, whom I need not name,  
Dwelt at the foot of an enormous hill,  
Whose summit from the valley seemed to touch  
The sky itself. These simple folks, observing  
How oft the inconstant moon, now with a horn,  
And now without, now waxing, and now waning,  
Supposed that on the top they might find out  
How she enlarged and shrunk into herself,  
One with a bag, another with a basket,  
Began to scale the precipice amain,  
Each eager in the strife to outclimb the rest;  
But finding at the peak they were no nearer,  
All fell down weary on the earth, and wished  
Most heartily that they had stayed below.  
Their neighbours from the bottom, seeing them  
Aloof, believed that they had reached the moon,  
And hurried breathless up to share the spoil.—  
This mountain is the mighty wheel of for tune,  
Upon whose rim the stupid vulgar think  
All is tranquillity, — though ne'er a bit."

After an exposition of the structure, incidents, and character of the "Orlando," and an allusion to the satirical meanings and merits which have been discovered in that marvellous creation of poetic skill, our biographer thus concludes: — "Satirists, however, have done little to improve mankind; they have condemned and promoted vice, they have ridiculed and recommended folly.

Instead of being the most chaste, severe, and instructive, it is notorious that (with few exceptions) they have been the most profligate, pernicious, and corrupting of all writers. Many of the most illustrious deserve to be crowned and decapitated, and their laurelled heads fixed on poles round the heights of Parnassus, as warnings to others, while they affect to expose sin, not to betray virtue; and while they declaim against lewdness, not to become panders to debauch the young, the innocent, and the unsuspecting. To go no farther than the example before us. If ever man deserved poetical honours, Ariosto did; and if ever poet deserved the curse of posterity for the prostitution of high talents, Ariosto does. Without presuming to judge him, even for his worst offences, beyond the present world, it had been better for many of his readers—why should we not say, at once, for all of them?—that he had never been born.” \*

The severe sentence pronounced upon the Italian poet at the close of the preceding extract, exposed the author to the charge of being hypercritical by more than one reviewer of the work. When this was mentioned to Montgomery, he said he had discharged his duty most conscientiously; and he thought it would be impossible for any person, with a proper sense of morality and delicacy, to read the entire works of Ariosto, and especially his satires, without acknowledging that he had indulged his pen in embodying prurient ideas in several passages, for the fault of which no splendour of genius could atone.

Mr. Bennet having reiterated his proposal of a trans-

\* Croly, in the preface to his “Modern Orlando,” says, “The truest champion of his [Ariosto’s] fame, would be an *Edizione Castigata*.”

atlantic trip, the poet replied in a long letter, of which the following is an extract : —

*James Montgomery to George Bennet.*

“Sheffield, Jan. 28. 1835.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,

“It is so much harder to say *No* than *Yes*, that I am sure you will forgive me for hesitating before I could find heart to begin my letter with the first of these comprehensive monosyllables (the most so indeed in human language), when I could not use the second. [After mentioning an outstanding promise to visit Newcastle-upon-Tyne to attend some missionary anniversaries in the first week of April, and the probability of being called to London on the affairs of the Gas Companies in Parliament, the writer proceeds] :—Again: for several months to come, I have literary occupation of a kind that I must not neglect. A new and uniform edition of all my poems in three volumes, at a moderate price, suited to the depreciated value of such commodities in the market, is about to be put to press; and I have to make the arrangements and superintend the whole, though, as hitherto, my booksellers take upon themselves all expense and hazard. I might add, that having long ago furnished two memoirs of Italian poets (Dante and Ariosto) for the first volume of a biographical series of Eminent Literary Characters, I am preparing a memoir of Tasso for the succeeding volume. Thus my hands as well as my feet are tied from travelling beyond the limits of our island this next spring; and my heart is not less a prisoner to the soil for a long time in prospect. The health of two persons very near and very dear to me \* is, in each case, so precarious, that I dare not remove far from within a few hours' journey of either, should what some time ago appeared again threaten. It is true that they are much better at present, but the strongest of us knows not what a day

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\* Miss Gales, and his brother Ignatius.

may bring forth, and too much depends upon the continuance for some time longer of each of these precious lives, — not to myself only, but in one instance, especially, to the family nearest in kin to me, — that I must wait, if I am permitted myself to remain in the body, some time before I can with a good conscience go forth to seek adventures either in the Old or New World — for I have sometimes looked almost desiringly across the Straits of Dover as well as the Atlantic. Thus situated, you will perceive that I have no choice but to take from day to day the steps that lie immediately before, without any purposes for the morrow but such as can be at a moment's notice abandoned. You often say, and say in the right spirit — for your past sacrifices and sufferings, to say nothing more, have shown that you conscientiously act up to the principle — that you watch the signal to move or to rest, as the cloud or the pillar by day or by night may indicate. I endeavour to do the same ; and if I am not otherwise deceived, at least I do not deceive myself when I say, that, so far from discovering an intimation to go forward, except in spirit, I am warned to stand still, and I trust, in the end, to see the salvation of God in all his dispensations of providence and grace, which I know are right, and must be the best, if patiently and faithfully received as they come, and improved as they ought to be for time and eternity. I cannot expatiate further at present ; you will perfectly understand me, and pray for me, I am sure, that I may be led in the right way, however painful that may be to flesh and blood for a season. As for yourself, my heart's desire and prayer to God assuredly is, and ever shall be, that He may guide you by *his* counsel, and afterwards receive you to glory.

“ Your truly obliged friend,

“ J. MONTGOMERY.

“ George Bennet, Esq.,  
The Grove, Hackney.”

Feb. 14. Died the Right Honourable Francis Basset, Lord de Dunstanville, the honoured representative of an

ancient family; but more distinguished for his patriotism than for his pedigree, for he was said to be “the most munificent benefactor ever known in Cornwall.” One of the most memorable of the public actions of his life was the taking command of the Cornish miners when they suddenly formed themselves into a volunteer corps in order to repel an apprehended attack on Plymouth by the combined fleets of France and Spain, when they unexpectedly steered into the Sound in August 1799. To do honour to the memory of this brave “old English gentleman,” his countrymen held a meeting on the 4th of November, at which Lord Boscawen presided, when it was determined to erect a pillar on Carn-brê, a lofty mountain-peak overlooking his residence of Illogan, near Redruth. Montgomery was applied to to write an ode, to be set to music, in honour of his memory: he declined to do that; but along with his reply, he sent in the form of a monumental inscription the following lines:—

“Go, build his monument to stand  
A sky-mark, seen o’er sea and land;  
And call on Virtue’s handmaid, Fame,  
To tell the glory which his name  
Sheds on the fabric, thence to be  
Itself the glory of Carn-Brê.  
Mourn not De Dunstanville as dead;  
Long as true heirs his footsteps tread,  
And Virtue’s faithful handmaid, Fame,  
Adds to their lineage name on name,  
As one by one ascends the sky,  
De Dunstanville can never die.”

The monument was erected; but the inscription was not used.\*

\* The pillar contains only these words:—“The county of Cornwall, to the memory of Francis Lord De Dunstanville and



In the earlier part of the year Montgomery was engaged in preparing for and conducting through the press a volume of original poetry; and although the pieces of which it was intended to consist had, for the most part, seen the light before, in one form or other,—several of them in the different "Annuals,"—and might, therefore, readily have been transferred to the compositor in "printed copy," yet such was the author's anxiety for the character of his verses as affecting his reputation, that he carefully transcribed the whole of the matter; not deeming any labour too great that either removed the smallest blemish, or afforded the means of adding, in any way, to the perfectness of the composition. The preface was dated "March 6th, 1835," but the publication of the work was delayed till the beginning of the next month in consequence of the political excitement prevailing at the time; the sudden and unexpected removal of Lord Melbourne from the direction of government, and the elevation of Sir Robert Peel to the premiership, wholly absorbing public attention. The new volume bore the title of "A Poet's Portfolio, or Minor Poems, in three Books." The first of these divisions consisted of pieces more or less in the form of "Narratives," the second of "Miscellanies," and the third, of poetical exercises on "Sacred and Scripture Subjects." The materials of this volume, as we have already intimated, had presented little or no attraction of novelty, except in their collected form; and as we have described them under the dates of their first appearance respectively, it seems

Basset, A. D. 1836." But, as we are informed by Mr. Wulff, rector of Illogan, besides the granite obelisk, the subscribers founded a better, and it may be hoped an equally lasting, memorial in the "Dunstanville Charity," for the purpose of giving annuities to disabled miners.

only necessary here to add that the "Poet's Portfolio" was favourably received by readers of taste, feeling, and piety. It was to readers of the latter class especially that his sentiments had become increasingly attractive; as to himself had become increasingly precious and habitual the contemplation of those sacred subjects, from which, at this period, he most frequently caught his inspiration. This more decided bias of the poet's mind toward heavenly things, was very properly noticed by one of the reviewers as characterising the contents of this volume. The same might have been said generally of his familiar conversation.

The spirited lines entitled "Farewell to War"\* were composed by the poet after listening to an address by a Captain Pilkington, on the principles of "Peace Societies," and perhaps printed in juxtaposition with the "Patriot's Pass Word," as corrective of the martial and spirit-stirring tone of the latter. To the series of mottos on "Birds,"† was now added that on the "Pelican," which is in a style of playful equivocation not usual with our poet:—

"Bird of the wilderness, what is thy name? —  
 The Pelican! — go take the trump of fame;  
 And if thou give the honour due to me,  
 The world may talk a little more of thee."

Mr. Holland endeavoured to convince the poet that the compliment paid to the "Stone-chat" is, in fact, due to the "Whin-chat." Montgomery admitted that he might be mistaken as to the name—though he thought he was right; but as for the bird he said he knew it well enough, when a boy at Fulneck, and should still know it. Bewick's cuts—that faithful en-

\* Works, p. 201.

† Ibid. p. 326.

graver having figured both these species of *Sylvia*—were appealed to; but the evidence rather increased than diminished the doubts of both parties; and as this was early in March, before the living birds themselves could be met with, the proof-sheet was returned to the printer unaltered, the “Stone-chat” retaining his place in this poetical aviary.

The temporary residence of Mr. Holland in Northumberland has already been mentioned. In letters which passed between the biographers at this period, the probability of Montgomery paying a visit to Newcastle where he had other friends, and the consequent anticipation that we might not only perambulate the banks of the “coally Tyne,” but visit the far-famed localities of Alnwick, Warkworth, &c. together, were topics often adverted to. While, however, it so happened that Mr. Holland returned to Sheffield without seeing realised at that time the projected tour, it also fell out, most unexpectedly, that Mr. Everett himself afterwards went to reside in the north under circumstances still more favourable to the encouragement of a hope that the bard and his friends might still meet in the ancient and prosperous town above named.

The anniversary of the Wesleyan Missionary Meeting at Newcastle having been fixed for the 4th of April, Mr. Everett succeeded in obtaining from Montgomery a promise to take the chair on that occasion. Accordingly, on the 30th of March, he started for the north, taking Fulneck in his way; and after spending two nights and a day with his friends at the Moravian establishment there, he reached Newcastle, where he was met and welcomed by Mr. Everett as his visitor.

He expressed himself in conversation as delighted with the first volume of Croker’s edition of Boswell’s “Life of Johnson,” which had just been issued by

Murray, as the commencement of a set which then promised, and in the result exhibited, a large amount of valuable annotation on the character of an individual, and the literary history of a period, in which almost every class of intelligent readers are more or less interested. We advert to this subject for the purpose of stating that it was the deliberate opinion of our friend — an opinion in which we concur — that Dr. Johnson, whatever may have been his mistakes and misgivings on religious subjects, rested his soul at last on the “sure foundation;” *i. e.* came to Christ as an humble and sincere penitent, and obtained mercy through the atonement.

Rival editions of the Works of Cowper, with lives of the poet by the Rev. T. S. Grimshawe and by Robert Southey, being announced, Montgomery expressed his extreme regret at this tendency toward a collision of interests by which all parties must needs suffer: for while, on the one hand, Southey had not only in a high degree the requisite accomplishments of an editor, but the ability, industry, and opportunities to produce an original memoir of equal novelty and interest in a literary point of view, he was hardly to be trusted with the religious character of such a man as Cowper; on the other hand, while Grimshawe might be presumed better to understand the spiritual phases of his subject, at the same time that he claimed an exclusive control over the letters of the poet as published by Dr. John Johnson, it was doubtful how far, in his hands, a Life, of which Hayley's was to be the substratum, would be successful. Montgomery added, that both Grimshawe and his publishers had pressed him to write, at least, an introduction to this edition; but on several accounts he had declined the task.

April 6. Montgomery, in pursuance of the special

object of his visit to Newcastle, addressed a crowded meeting assembled this morning in Brunswick Chapel with his usual fervour and animation. It was evident that, while descanting on the grand objects, and contemplating the momentous issues of Christian missions, in relation both to time and eternity, he was anxious to give such a solemn tone to the proceedings at the outset that there should be no temptation, from anything that he said, to introduce the convenient, but ill-timed, discussion of current politics ; and, accordingly, everything went off well. He mentioned at supper, that when he presided at a missionary meeting in Bristol, a few months after the lamentable riots and burnings in that city, and at a moment when the nation was in such a condition of inflammability on the subject of the Reform Bill, that it appeared as if it depended on the lifting of a hand, or the raising of a voice, whether or not we should actually have a civil war, he cautioned the speakers against trespassing on dangerous ground. "Well," said he, "I called upon William Dawson [the eloquent Yorkshire 'local preacher'], about whom especially I had my fears. He rose at once, turned his broad back toward me, and bolted off in a speech directly and vehemently political ! What I thought or felt, I dare say he cared not ; for he never allowed me to see more of his face than the tip of his nose, when he threw back his head in some of his most energetic passages. The speech was certainly an extraordinary one—even from *him*, but I dared not enjoy it, whatever others did, till it was over : for he dashed along the line of peril, fine as a razor's edge, but without once slipping off on either side : it was a most powerful and well-managed display of his very original and effective style of platform oratory."

On the following morning, when the poet received



his letters, and while he opened and read first of all that from home, it was evident something in it was powerfully affecting his feelings. "Oh, Mr. Everett," said he, handing a letter to his friend, and covering his face for a moment with his hands, "this is one of the most extraordinary communications which I ever received!" It was a letter from Sir Robert Peel, in which he asked Montgomery's concurrence in a proposal to name him to his Majesty as a person proper to receive a pension of 150*l.* a year out of a sum of about 700*l.* remaining at the minister's disposal for such purposes. The poet almost immediately turned to Mr. Everett's desk, and wrote a note to the premier acknowledging and accepting the proffered donative: it was lucky, however, for the result, that Sir Robert Peel did not wait for this reply before he executed his kind purpose, for on the following day he ceased to be minister. On the 10th he wrote to Montgomery, officially notifying the grant, at the same time expressly stating that this compliment, which he wished had been of greater value, was paid solely as the reward of literary merit; but he kindly added, "I think you will be pleased when you hear the names of those who have, with yourself, been selected on public grounds, and with a view to the encouragement of science and literature, for this mark of royal favour,—Professor Airey, of Cambridge, Mrs. Somerville, Sharon Turner, and Robert Southey."

April 7. On the evening of this day Mr. Holland arrived at Newcastle, and found Mr. Everett and the poet just returned from a missionary meeting at North Shields, the latter having gratified a large audience with a speech, the main design of which was to show how important was, and might be, the connection between such a seaport as that at the mouth of the Tyne and the opportunities for sending out the Bible



and the Preacher to every part of the world whither its ships were bound. The following morning the three friends breakfasted with a religious party at the residence of Mr. T. C. Gibson, in Saville Row; on which occasion Montgomery, on being asked to pray, knelt down, and addressed his Maker in a tone of fervour, simplicity, and sweetness which affected every one present.\* On being afterwards asked to give his opinion on the subject of Liberia, he said he thought the promoters of the scheme had been misunderstood, if not misrepresented; while their agent, Elliot Cresson, had hardly met with civil treatment in some quarters: for his part, he saw no harm in giving the colonisers a fair trial. As for slavery in the United States, it was like a lion shut up with the people in a cage; and, however they might stave off its attack for a time, it would in the end as certainly turn upon and rend them there as it would in the forest, unless they by a timely fore-action got quit of the danger by annihilating it.† Speaking of the beneficial influence of a single individual of decidedly religious character, and zealous in his Saviour's cause, upon the inhabitants of a village, he instanced Mr. Thomas Cocker, of Hathersage, of whose hearty welcome and hospitable entertainment he could bear testimony, having gladly accepted his annual invitation to attend a Bible Society Meeting during the twenty years preceding.‡

\* There was one person present on the occasion referred to, — the mother and mistress of the family, — a lovely, active, pious woman, in the prime of life, who, before the end of the year, was called upon to exchange a sphere of active exertion in her Saviour's cause on earth, for a state of rest and reward in his presence in heaven.

† We have alluded to the happy realisation of this hope in a previous page.

‡ This good old man died in 1836; and Montgomery, at the request of his friends, drew his character in the following —

April 8. We visited the site of the new markets, and had an interview with Mr. Grainger, the architect, whose history is so interesting in connection with his marvellous building exploits in Newcastle. We were all struck with the contrast between the splendid erections going on before our eyes, and what imagination pictured of the same spot when it was the "Nuns' Field," the coffins and skulls of the pious sisterhood of past times having been removed to make way for the deep foundations of the modern edifice.

We then went to the library and museum of the Philosophical Society. In the former there is, among others, a portrait of Dr. Morrison, which Montgomery admired, remarking, "That man is a far more interesting object of contemplation than yonder castle, with all its massive grandeur and its ancient historical associations. Once a poor boy, sitting on the lowest form of a Sunday school in this town, he, as resulting from his evangelical labours, exercises at this moment an influence in the vast empire of China, which must continue to be felt for ages to come." In the museum we were struck with the splendid collection of geological objects, especially

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*"Epitaph.*

"He sleeps in Jesus : — would you read  
His character and style ;  
' Behold an Israelite indeed,  
In whom there is no guile.'

"This, of Nathanael, as 't was said  
By One who all things knew,  
Of him in life, who here lies dead,  
Seemed beautifully true.

"And as he trod the narrow way  
Heaven for himself to find,  
He left a lengthening, brightening ray  
To lighten those behind."

the fossils illustrative of the carboniferous rocks. "We shine in coals here," said the curator. "You do that," replied Montgomery, "all the world over." Looking at a very finely tattooed head of a New Zealander, with the teeth shining and clinched—"Those teeth," said he, "look as if they had done hard service, but one dare not indulge in suppositions about cannibal propensities. You see, in the expression of this countenance, the pride which must have sustained the man under the sufferings endured while his face was thus elaborately punctured; but the pride of the savage, like that of his civilised fellow-creature, will submit to anything—but *submission!*"

Having called at the quaint old shop formerly occupied by Bewick, the wood engraver, and had some conversation with the son of that ingenious artist, we closed our city ramble by a visit to the castle, the most ancient and conspicuous monument of "the olden time." The woman, who showed us through the dark, vaulted, and desolate rooms\* of this once famous border stronghold, pointed to a mutilated statue, and said in the strong local dialect, "That is King James; he used to stand with his face towards the north." "That *was* remarkable," replied Montgomery, drily, "for the king himself always preferred to have his face towards the *south*." On our way home, while passing through an obscure "chare" or alley, "*This*," said Mr. Everett, "is Love Lane; and *that* the house in which two of the most remarkable men of the age, Lord Stowell and his brother Lord Eldon, were bred." *Montgomery*: "And really great men they were, as lawyers—

\* Great alterations have taken place in the interior of the castle since 1835. Some of the rooms have been restored in conformity with the original designs; and they are now appropriately used for the museum and meetings of the local Archæological Society.

whatever may be thought of their politics. It is only in England that such personages can spring from such localities ; that poor boy sitting on the cold step there *may* perhaps become Lord Chancellor some day." These explorations, with what may be termed *official* visits to Shields, Tynemouth, and Sunderland, comprised our principal out-door movements—none of the contemplated trips to more distant places appearing practicable ; for, as Montgomery said, what with public services and taking meals with different friends three times each day, Mr. Everett had kept him in the treadmill ever since he came ; nevertheless, he had greatly enjoyed his visit.

April 9. We breakfasted at Mr. Blackwell's, in Ellison Place ; a large party, comprising the representatives of several religious sects, being present. For some time the conversation turned chiefly on what are termed "revivals," or meetings for prayer and exhortation, at which extravagant vehemence in these exercises is usually accompanied by extraordinary avowals of spiritual influence. Of course, on such a topic, the opinions of different persons, of equally undoubted piety, varied considerably. Montgomery said, that however he might hesitate about defending them in the abstract, he dare not, in practice, oppose them ; for, to say nothing of the presumption of such a short-sighted creature as man, after fervent prayer for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, to seek to limit or control the operations of that Spirit, he had known too many instances of the sudden conversion of individuals from sin to holiness at meetings of this kind in Sheffield, and had read too many indisputable testimonies in favour of their beneficial effects in Scotland and America, to permit him to condemn them altogether. Mr. Blackwell introduced the subject of the Society for the Assistance of

pooraged Females, which had done so much good in Sheffield; he had, he said, set his heart on organising a similar association for Newcastle, but had not yet been able to effect his object. After some further conversation, it was agreed to make this visit of Montgomery the occasion of originating such a society; accordingly, the party present, comprising members of *seven* religious denominations, formed itself into a "committee of the whole house:" Mr. Blackwell was voted to the chair. Mr. Everett then moved, and Mr. Holland seconded, a resolution, having for its object the formation of an "Aged Female Society," which was cordially adopted, and practically carried out by the good people present.

On the 10th he started for Liverpool, leaving to Mr. Holland's care for Sheffield a large parcel of books, which he borrowed from Mr. Everett's library, comprising several volumes of old poetry, which he had not previously seen, particularly a folio edition of the works of Taylor, the "Water Poet," which was both rare and curious.

*James Montgomery to George Bennet.*

"Sheffield, April 23. 1835.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"I have scarcely had time to turn round since I reached home on Saturday evening, after an absence of nearly three weeks at Newcastle and Liverpool where (at both places) kind inquiries were made of me concerning you and your welfare, and your prospects. Of the latter I could say nothing; but of the former I was happy to feel myself at liberty to speak well, believing that in a considerable degree your personal health prospers, even as, I trust, your soul prospers. Since my return, the London Missionary Anniversary, the Chimney Sweepers' Feast, and many arrears of letters and papers lying on my table, have kept me in continual perturbation, either running after time, or, like a boy trying to keep up with a coach, panting along-

side of it, till he is forced to give up the hopeless experiment of two legs against sixteen, and all the spokes of four wheels into the bargain. . . . 'Running after great men,' an exercise to which I am quite unaccustomed, and in which I should cut a sorry figure at the best, reminds me of what you have perhaps already heard, — the noble conduct of Sir Robert Peel\*, as the very last act of his office, in completing the instrument for granting me a pension of 150*l.* a year from the civil list, out of a surplus of about 700*l.* appropriated to reward literary and scientific persons whose works had not compensated them in proportion to his very liberal estimate of their merits — at least I may say so in my case. Now I certainly did not run after the great man on this occasion, but his letter had actually to run after me, offering me honour and riches, from Sheffield to Newcastle, and from Newcastle to Liverpool,—aye, and they won the race, and fastened on the game (my poor self) only at the saving moment, before he resigned the seals.† Nothing could be more candid, generous,

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\* The proposal originated entirely in the "mere motion" of the Right Hon. Secretary, although accidentally backed by the opinion of a noble peer; for it so happened that, on the very morning that Sir Robert Peel had made out a list of the names of the persons to whom he intended to offer pensions, Lord Wharncliffe called at his office, and the question was put to him—"Do you know anything of Mr. Montgomery, to whom I intend to offer a small pension?" "I know him very well," was his lordship's reply; "he is very highly esteemed by the inhabitants of Sheffield, to whom you could not pay a more acceptable compliment than that you propose."

† It is worthy of remark that almost the last act of Lord Melbourne at the close of his administration in 1841 was the grant of a pension of 200*l.* a year to Cary, the translator of Dante. The poet having addressed a sonnet to Lord Durham on his recall from the government of Canada in 1838, some difficulties were thrown in the way of the friends of Cary, in their solicitations for that pension. Rogers, who long exerted himself on the subject, says, in a letter to Lord Holland, "But he has written a sonnet: what had not Montgomery done, when Sir Robert Peel gave him what he did?"—*Memoir of Cary*, vol. i. p. 315.



or delicate than the terms in which Sir R. P. proposed the royal bounty to me, or the promptitude and grace with which at length, against so many chances (for his first letter was written the day after his first defeat on Lord J. Russell's resolution, and the second, which closed the negotiation, after his Majesty had consented to accept of his resignation), he communicated the successful issue. I can only say here that, with many very courteous expressions of satisfaction that he was enabled to do thus much for me, and a kind intimation of regret that he could not do more, he distinctly stated that my 'acceptance of it would impose upon me *no obligation, personal or political*.' I thanked him sincerely, and accepted it as from the Lord through him, and this I was not ashamed to acknowledge to himself.

"I am very truly, your ever obliged friend,

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"George Bennet, Esq.,  
Grove Place, Hackney, London."

Lord Melbourne, in forming the government that assumed the direction of affairs on the retirement of Sir Robert Peel, assigned to Lord Morpeth the difficult and ungrateful office of Secretary for Ireland. As this appointment required his lordship to surrender his trust as one of the representatives of the West Riding of Yorkshire, a new election took place, which was warmly, but unsuccessfully, contested with the ex-member by the Hon. J. S. Wortley, second son of Lord Wharnccliffe. In this struggle Montgomery took no part whatever, not even voting on the occasion: he was not, however, forgotten. Whether the fact of Lord Wharnccliffe having cordially concurred with Sir Robert Peel in the propriety of bestowing the *regium donum* on the Sheffield bard had become known, or the very circumstance of his not voting was deemed sufficient evidence of political lesion, we know not; but the terms "poet pensioner and turn-coat" were associated with

his name in a placard posted on the walls! He, however, only laughed at the squib, remarking that "they might have waited till he had taken some part on one side or the other." The good will to "offend" the unoffending did not stop here. Montgomery had been summoned to London to give evidence before a parliamentary committee relative to the Sheffield Gas Works Company, of which he was chairman; and two or three days afterwards, as Mr. Holland was passing along the street, he noticed a crowd gathered about a lad, who was holding up on a board a large placard announcing, "Price Three-pence, The History of a Church and Warming-pan, by James Montgomery, Esq." Whether the unprincipled speculator in this reprint of a crude, and, except in its title, unattractive *jeu d'esprit* repaid himself by its sale may be doubted: the individual who was intended to be especially annoyed by the libel never saw it.

On the evening of Monday, April 27th, Montgomery presided, as usual, at the annual meeting of the Wesleyan Missionary Society in Sheffield. Mr. Holland, who was present, was surprised at the earnestness, the solemnity, and the general character of the address delivered by the chairman: it was evidently as little expected by the preachers on the platform as by the rest of the audience. The fact was, that certain matters which at that time agitated the Wesleyan body awaited decision at the Conference about to be held in Sheffield; and Montgomery felt that he should be serving a cause, the interests of which he had at heart, by thus stepping in with a preliminary admonition suited to the occasion. This able and seasonable address, which embodied the speaker's views on the polity of the religious community with whom he was at that time so intimately connected, was most cordially received and

widely circulated, as containing sentiments which cannot lose their interest so long as Methodism continues to exist among the group of agencies having for their object the evangelisation of the world.

*James Montgomery to George Bennet.*

“Sheffield, May 8. 1835.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,

“Though this scrawl will not be worth the postage, yet I know you will make it welcome, because it will give you a proof of my friendship, in asking for a proof of yours; and though you may not be ready to meet my request, the will shall be most gratefully accepted for the deed.

I believe that I must be in London some time on Thursday next on this miserable Gas Light business; but as I may have to look out for quarters for myself—no regular arrangement having yet been made—and I wish to secure a quiet retreat for the first night, at least, if you can find me room I will endeavour to be at Hackney, in the course of the evening, though I must probably go ‘as far as the west is from the east’ (in town) from you and home for the remainder of my day’s banishment in that most desolate of all places under the sun to my heart—that peopled wilderness, where, among a hundred thousand houses, I could not without fear and trembling put my head under the roof of one, without an introduction that would secure me good usage, so wretchedly nervous am I where I am a stranger among strangers;—though five minutes of resolution to make inquiry would no doubt, with money in my pocket, open quarters of any description, from the accommodations of a palace to those of a cellar or a garret, or any room between both, according to my means or my fancy. Now if it be quite convenient for you to entertain me, as ‘a way-faring man that turneth in to tarry for a night,’ at the time mentioned, pray leave a line for me at the Mission House, Austin Friars, and I will call to know my fate there soon after my arrival. It is possible lodgings may be provided,

to which I can go immediately, by our deputation, and if so I shall not need to trouble you.

“I am truly your friend,

“J. MONTGOMERY.

“George Bennet, Esq.,  
Grove Place, Hackney.”

The exigency of a night's shelter in London, so sensitively anticipated in the foregoing letter, was duly met by his two colleagues, Messrs. Rogers and Wilson, solicitors for the Sheffield Gas Company, who had provided lodgings for their chairman and themselves in Old Palace Yard. Although, as he remarked afterwards, he never felt himself less in a poetical mood than during this visit, domiciled as he was in a spot so rich in historical associations, he nevertheless took occasion to renew his acquaintance with men of literature; and otherwise to enjoy himself amidst the discharge of what to him was an irksome, and must always be an unpopular duty,—the defending against speculative competition property vested in a joint-stock concern on the faith of an Act of Parliament.\*

As he was in town on public business, and could not therefore enjoy his wonted seclusion, he considered it becoming to pay his respects personally to Sir Robert Peel, of whose friendly disposition he had so recently received proof. The Right Hon. Baronet received the Sheffield poet with his characteristic urbanity; and the

\* Montgomery's position as chairman of the Old Gas Company rendered him, as might be expected, very unpopular for a time with that large portion of his townsmen who sought the establishment of a rival concern. No wonder that such rivalry was stimulated by the announcement that the old company were paying a *half-yearly* dividend of  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., and selling gas at more than double the price to which it fell on the origination of a *third* company in 1853.

interview, it need hardly be added, left a pleasing impression on his mind. Sir Robert afterwards invited Montgomery to dinner, on which occasion he met "between twenty and thirty men of note," including his early friend Chantrey, the sculptor, who said to their host, "Sir Robert, I can tell you something that will probably surprise you: thirty years ago I painted the portrait of Mr. Montgomery!" "And I, Sir Francis," said the poet, "esteemed that portrait as one of the most precious of your productions." The Bishop of London delighted the bard by the "old English cordiality" with which he returned his salutation; shaking him "heartily by the hand in a manly manner, and not finically offering him two fingers, after the manner of some persons." He met Rogers, whose invitation to dinner he would gladly have accepted, had it been for any day except *Sunday*: he was also present at an evening party at Dr. Lardner's. Probably, however, none of these fashionable soirées afforded him so much gratification as he derived from an unceremonious interview with his old friend, Miss Aiken: with her he talked over the events of past times, both of them having experienced repeated bereavements by the death of their early literary associates, who, as the poet observed, "belonged to a period when, if there was perhaps less of refinement, there was certainly more of earnest sincerity and truth, even in authorship: persons then wrote because they had meditated and felt." Lucy Aiken, he said, was a name enshrined in his memory with great respect.

While in London he called upon Saunders and Otley, the publishers of Grimshawe's "Cowper," who reiterated their desire that he should write an introduction to the poems. On his peremptory rejection of an overture which, under other circumstances, he would have wel-

comed, they asked him if he could name any one to whom they might apply. "Gentlemen," said he, "your convenience will not afford me time to do the thing well, even if I were now to undertake it; and I cannot afford to do it indifferently on any ground. I am aware you not only want a person who is likely to do justice to the subject, but who has *a name*. Now there is Josiah Conder; he has probably the requisite taste, feeling, and talent—but he is a dissenter, and therefore would not perhaps suit your purpose: the same may be said of Isaac Taylor, whose name would otherwise at least equally serve you. Why not apply to the vicar of Harrow? He has, I think, a genius and feelings in sympathy with the subject; and would, I doubt not, write a clever essay, if you could prevail upon him to undertake the work." The publishers waited upon Cunningham the same afternoon; entered into an agreement with him; and issued the sixth volume of their series, with his name in the title-page, followed by an essay from his pen, by way of preface to the poetical portion of the work. In this he mostly treads in the steps of Montgomery, whose opinions he quotes: he likewise embodied a long passage from an article in the "Eclectic Review," attributing it to Robert Hall; but which was, in fact, written by Montgomery. Grimshawe's edition of Cowper somewhat resembles that of Southey, in its conveniently portable size, and in the neatness of its engraved illustrations: it also comprises the valuable collection of copyright letters previously edited by Dr. John Johnson; but the Laureate's elegant and original memoir, and the variety of new matter, both in prose and rhyme, which he has been enabled to embody in his pages—to say nothing of those extraordinary editorial accomplishments which he brought to bear on an undertaking so congenial alike to his taste



and his feelings — have conferred on the works of Cowper, issued under his auspices, a higher character of accessory attractiveness than had otherwise awaited the name even of this most amiable of poets.

Having occasion to call upon Mr. Horace Twiss, that gentleman, immediately on the poet presenting himself, exclaimed, “Are you the Montgomery who wrote the ‘Common Lot’ — a poem which has been a favourite of mine during the last eighteen years?” The author replied, that he certainly had written some verses under that title, which had met with considerable favour, as containing sentiments in which all thoughtful persons felt an interest.” *Twiss*: “It is, sir, one of the finest compositions in the language.” *Montgomery*: “It has, indeed, had the *uncommon lot* of being highly praised.”

*James Montgomery to George Bennet.*

[Post-mark, London, June 22. 1835.]

“MY DEAR FRIEND,

“All our schemes here are so subject to frustration, that we ought never to *be* disappointed when we *are* disappointed. Our case before the parliamentary committee closed on Friday, when, instead of coming to an immediate decision, the gentlemen unanimously recommended an arrangement between the disputants, and adjourned till to-morrow to give time to negotiate. We had two days previously expressed our perfect willingness, and proposed certain terms as a basis, in consequence of the interposition of the chairman and others, though we stipulated to have our defence heard out. Our opponents declined to enter upon any treaty, and their solicitor declared they would rather lose their bill than do so. However, the same evening (Friday last) he and their deputies set off for Sheffield, and convened a meeting of their subscribers to report progress, and receive instructions how to act. . . . Thus circumstanced, the best

prospective arrangement that I can make is to *hope* to be with you on Saturday, and enjoy the Sunday and Monday in as much peace as my nerves will allow me to taste : after which — but it is in vain to look forward beyond what I now propose.

“ I remain, very truly, your affectionate friend,

“ J. MONTGOMERY.

“ George Bennet, Esq., Mrs. Kirkpatrick’s,  
Grove Place, Hackney.”

*James Montgomery to George Bennet.*

“ New Palace Yard, June 26. 1835.

“ MY DEAR FRIEND,

“ . . . I must postpone my visit till next week, when I think I may be able to spare two days, and no more. These things are quite out of my power to order as I would ; and I am most reluctantly held here in captivity. I do not remember having spent six weeks less satisfactorily than those that I have lately rather *suffered* than *employed*. I seem to have been within the walls of the Inquisition, and daily exposed on the rack, or subjected to the scourge, or torture more exquisite if less excruciating to the nerves, for it is ‘ the spirit ’ that is wounded, — the iron enters the soul ; ‘ hope deferred maketh the heart sick,’ and ‘ the desire, which is a tree of life, cometh ’ *not*. Scripture phrases alone can express such miseries. But I can say that I have conscientiously as well as disinterestedly and self-denyingly acted and borne my part hitherto. *You* must therefore submit as well as *I* to a necessity which we cannot control. How differently was I occupied, and, in comparison with these impotent labours and penances, how delightfully did days and weeks in the years 1829–30–31 pass over my head at Hackney and elsewhere in this mighty heart of England ! But they are *gone*, and the very regret that they *are* gone is relief from the pressure of worldly care, anxiety, and vexation, under which I groan, and from which I pant to be delivered. But I am rambling and repining, when amidst all the causes of such fretfulness I ought to be rejoicing amidst

tribulation, that while the peace which the world *under a beneficial Providence* can give, has been in a great measure withdrawn from me, *that* peace which the world cannot take away has not been wholly withdrawn, though I have too little tasted of it, when, but for my ingratitude and unbelief, it might have abounded the more in proportion to my outward perplexities. But, thank God! the way to the footstool of the throne of grace is always open, and to lie down in the dust there is better than to be exalted upon the throne of Britain itself, or to be puffed up in the vanity of a deceived imagination, and say, ‘I am rich and increased in goods,’ &c., and have need of nothing, while we want all. I must conclude in haste, for interruptions here are ‘*the order of the day,*’ which is, to use Lady Macbeth’s phrase, ‘*most admired disorder.*’ But amidst all changes and chances I am your ever faithful friend,

“J. MONTGOMERY.

“George Bennet, Esq., Grove Place, Hackney.”

The Professorship of Rhetoric in the University of Edinburgh having been some time vacant, an appointment was now about to be made; and as the election was with the town council, Mr. Treasurer Black wrote to Montgomery, asking him to allow himself to be put in nomination for the office, and assuring him that his success would be certain. This communication—which, on account of its non-official character, became a subject of discussion in the council—reached Sheffield during Montgomery’s absence in London; but although some time was thus lost ere the transmission of his reply, this was the less material, as he respectfully declined the proffered compliment, contrary to the expectation of his correspondent, who assured him that his appointment to the situation “would be hailed with universal satisfaction in Scotland;” and Mr. Black has since assured us that he retains the conviction, that had the poet consented

to become a candidate, his election would have been certain.

The Sheffield New Gas Company's Bill was carried in parliament, against the opposition of the party who had now been six weeks in London as representatives of the Old Company; and Montgomery was so little of a partisan — so decidedly opposed to strife for the mere sake of annoying the enemy — that he had made up his mind to the defeat long before his colleagues were willing to come to the same conclusion. "Last evening," says he, in a note to Mr. Bennet, dated July 1st. 1835, "The New Gas Company's Bill was read a third time in the House of Commons, and we are hesitating whether to follow it into the Lords. I am so decidedly against this, that I have made up my mind to return home as soon as I can huddle up my private business here."

*James Montgomery to George Bennet.*

"No. 10. New Palace Yard, July 6. 1835.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"Your letter was *misdirected*, and after hunting me from place to place, like following a fly on the High Moors, just arrived in time to throw salt on my tail, and catch me as I was spreading my wings for Hackney, which, under *present* circumstances, would have been a desolation to me (with all its amiable inhabitants of my acquaintance, and its endeared recollections of former pleasant days spent there), had you not been there to welcome me on Saturday evening, as I had hoped when I wrote last. I had made my farewell visit to Woolwich on Thursday and Friday. I therefore determined to spend Sunday here; and I am glad that I did, for though I was unwell, and my peace a good deal disturbed by a hasty circumstance that crossed me in the morning, I was *led*, in attempting to make my way to another place, — for I will not say that I *strayed*, — into the late

Mr. Burder's chapel in Fetter Lane (our own being yet closed for repairs, &c.), where I had the unexpected but most seasonable privilege to sit down at our Saviour's Table with his disciples assembling there. Finding unexpectedly that it was the Communion day, I felt my heart drawn towards the people, and in our Saviour's own words (if I may be permitted to appropriate them) 'with desire I desired to eat that passover' with them. I therefore introduced myself to our good friend Mr. Muston, whose honest face — that of an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile — encouraged me to ask permission to remain; and you may be sure it was cordially granted. . . . Now to business. . . . If it quite suits you, I can go down to Hackney to-morrow evening, and return next morning. We must hope that a better opportunity of meeting in this neighbourhood will be granted to us in the course of our respective pilgrimages — by different but parallel roads (I trust), each narrow and (in John Bunyan's language) 'as straight as a ruler can draw it' — to the same journey's end, even to Mount Zion, where all God's travelling children meet.

"I am, truly your friend,

" J. MONTGOMERY.

"George Bennet, Esq., Hackney."

*James Montgomery to George Bennet.*

"10. New Palace Yard, Westminster, July 9. 1835.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"In the hurry of packing up to leave town, I have only time to say '*Farewell*;' and my heart as well as my hand says so, though my lips cannot. May you fare well in time, amidst afflictions, trials, and crosses, as well as under the clear shining of the Sun of Righteousness after rain! and may you fare well in eternity, in the full glory of the beatific vision! and may I see your happiness and share it for our Saviour's sake!

"I am your affectionate friend,

" J. MONTGOMERY.

"George Bennet, Esq., Grove Place, Hackney."

## CHAP. LXXIII.

1835. .

MONTGOMERY RETURNS TO SHEFFIELD. — LETTER TO GEORGE BENNET, — MRS. HOFLAND'S DESCRIPTION OF THE POET AT THIS PERIOD. — HIS VISIT TO DINSDALE SPAW. — ROKEBY. — BALLAD WRITING. — MEMOIR OF TASSO. — WENTWORTH HOUSE. — ANNIVERSARY OF COVERDALE'S BIBLE. — HANNAH KILHAM. — LETTERS FROM AND TO ROBERT MONTGOMERY THE POET.

MONTGOMERY remained in London just eight weeks, spending two or three days with his brother Ignatius and the Moravian friends at Ockbrook, on his way to Sheffield, which he reached on the 12th of June, after a longer period of absence than he had known since his involuntary sojourn in York Castle forty years before. Being asked what places of worship he had attended, he said, that when at Woolwich, where he generally spent Sunday, he attended church: while in town he went once to the Methodist meeting; once to the Moravian chapel in Fetter Lane; once to an Independent chapel at Hackney with his friend G. Bennet, Esq.; and once he heard a bishop preach in Westminster Abbey. The latter, he said, "attempted to extract the philosophy of the gospel, instead of preaching it in its simplicity; he could not, however, have preached as he did, without the gospel." Immediately on his arrival at Sheffield, and after exchanging salutations with Mr. Holland, he thus wrote to Mr. Everett:—"I arrived at home, after an absence of two months in



London, yesterday evening, and I snatch a minute to post on the plume of a feather—a ‘grey goose quill’—to Newcastle, to say that we all here hope to welcome you as our guest in the Hartshead at the ensuing Conference. We know you, and you know us; we therefore think that *we can make you* comfortable here, because we shall do our best for that purpose, and if we try to succeed, and you help us to do so, we cannot fail.” Mr. Everett gladly accepted the invitation; and thus (as it happened) paid a farewell visit to a spot which had so long been endeared to him by many pleasing associations.

*James Montgomery to George Bennet.*

“Sheffield, Aug. 20. 1835.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,

“I write to you at a time when I am so much engaged and troubled with arrears of business, — such business as an idle man like me never fails to have in abundance, if it be but as the accumulation of particles of dust on the books in his library, which soil his fingers and disturb his equanimity whenever he touches them, — that I am obliged, for the sake of filling up the sheet, to take one already half filled up, as you will see on the other leaf; and whatever you may think of the lines, they are better than any I should have written on the page. I have, indeed, little to say, except that your last letter, like all its predecessors, from all quarters of the world, whence, from time to time, they came, was truly welcome; and though there is a cast of thought over its aspect, and a tone of something like sadness in its language, yet it was not the less acceptable, because I always wish to hear of you *as you are*. There is, however, no repining in it; but humble thankfulness for manifold mercies, and *to be grateful is to be happy*. Much suffering and solicitude may, indeed, be connected with bodily or mental affliction at the same time; but to be able ‘in every-

thing to give thanks,' while at the same time we have the privilege 'by prayer and supplication to make known our wants to our Heavenly Father,' is in itself such a *state of blessedness*, that, enjoying this, we may well wait with patience for the result of any trials with which we are exercised. So it is with you; and therein I do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice, though what you have to bear, meanwhile, may not be joyous but grievous. All is well when we know that all *will be* well; and this we may know if we know that 'we love God.'

"I am truly your friend,

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"George Bennet, Esq., Grove Place, Hackney, London."

As referring to a period coincident with the latter end of August 1835, the following passage from an article written by Mrs. Hoffland, and entitled "Sheffield and its Poets," may be appropriately introduced here:—

"Here long resided Mary of Scotland as a prisoner; her time being divided between Sheffield Castle, which stood where the principal inn now stands, and the Manor House, a beautiful country seat of the Earl of Shrewsbury's, of which a tower, where she often sate, is still standing . . . As widow, wife, and mother,—as woman, peerless in beauty,—as sovereign, bereft of a crown, yet still capable of enchaining all hearts,—what agonising recollections, what self-sustaining consolations, from time to time must have risen up in her bosom!—and who more fitted to interpret her musings than he who says —

" 'I gave my harp to Sorrow's hand,  
And she has ruled its chords so long,  
They will not move at my command,  
They only tremble to her song!'

"Most happily, this is no longer the case: Montgomery is now not only a poet in full possession of fame, and com-

manding the most extensive circle of readers that any poet can boast, but he is justly appreciated as a good man, of extraordinary capabilities, by his townsmen and the country at large. Nature, as if seconding the tardy justice of man in redeeming the past, has rendered him the very youngest man of his years ever beheld; for had he not been known to the world as a poet thirty years, we really think he might at this very time pass for thirty, — such is the slightness of his figure, the elasticity of his step, the smoothness of his fair brow, the mobility and playfulness of his features when in conversation. This circumstance, it is true, makes a great difference; the lighting up of Montgomery's eye in the moment when he is warmed by his subject, or induced to smile by others, is absolutely electrical. Unfortunately this beautiful adjunct to his eloquence is rarely enjoyed by those who are so fortunate as to attend his lectures, in consequence of that habit of looking down induced by his naturally modest and retiring mind, at all times reluctant in disclosing its treasured stores of knowledge, or communicating the discoveries of its genius. I was unfortunate in the period of my visit, it being that of the Conference of the Wesleyan Methodists, in consequence of which there was a great influx of strangers connected with that body; and as every one either calls on the great poet, or in some way angles for his company, who consider themselves more particularly entitled to the claim of Christian brotherhood, no wonder that at such a time he was half killed with engagements and harassed with homage. To this were added charity bazaars, public meetings on bills in parliament, and petitions from the church, all of which rendered him the busiest of the busy, transforming the gentle poet into the public man, — so much the more must my heart thank him for the dear and valuable hour which he bestowed on me . . . . With the world, as to its gauds and luxuries, he has nothing to do; but with its sorrows, ignorance, and want he is continually engaged; and when Sir Robert Peel, to his own immortal honour, marked the sense himself and his countrymen entertained

of Montgomery's merit, he only added to his power of benefiting his fellow-creatures, for of personal indulgence in expenditure he has unquestionably no idea."\*

At the beginning of September the poet and his friend Rowland Hodgson left Sheffield to spend a few weeks at Middleton-One-Row, in the county of Durham; staying for three or four days on the way with Mr. Hodgson's nephew, the Rev. George Alderson, who was chaplain to the Duke of Leeds at Hornby Castle. On reaching their destination, the friends took up their abode at the Dinsdale Hotel, which they agreed was one of the most comfortable they had ever occupied. We believe from hence they visited Rokeby for two or three days; attending the church on a Sunday, and sitting in a pew adjacent to that of J. B. S. Morritt, Esq., to whom, however, they did not make themselves known. Montgomery was particularly struck with the scenery at the place where the main river receives the Greta — "that branch of the Tees which deserves special notice, not only because the muse of Scott and the pencil of Turner have been employed on its banks, but because of its marking out the line of the Roman *Iter* from *Cata-ractonium* to *Luguvallium*."† It appears that he intended to write a memento of this visit in rhyme, as we have the following fragment: —

"Where meet the Greta and the Tees,  
Beneath their over-arching trees,  
A little lonely nook I found,  
A spot of consecrated ground,

---

\* Ramsay's Life and Remains of Mrs. Hofland, p. 127.

† Phillips's Yorkshire, p. 47.

By vagrant steps no longer trod.  
 Here flowers the grave-embedded sod,  
 But where is now the house of God ?" &c.\*

"On the other half of this sheet," says Mr. Roberts in a letter to Montgomery, "I have sent a ballad, which I wish you to correct and return. You will perceive what has inspired me, though I have availed myself of a poetic licence in treating the subject. I am aware that you, like Dr. Johnson, set very lightly by ballads; but if *lasting popularity* be a sign of merit — and I think it is — then ballads are not to be despised. In what, for example, can there be *greater merit*, or even sublimity, than in the following stanza? —

" ' The poet and the poet's friend,  
     On health and pleasure bent,  
 Together silent in a chaise,  
     To Hornby Castle went.'

Now, sir, every word here is as full of meaning as an egg is full of meat: every line may be divided into several heads, from which might be drawn far more instruction than all the servant-girls obtained from the sermon of — &c. You must not talk about its being easy to write ballads — so it is to do anything *badly*: it is easy *so* to govern a kingdom, as we now know to

\* The allusion is to an ancient cemetery formerly surrounding a church in Rokeby Park. How much the poet's mind was at this time alive to impressions indicating the harmony of external nature, may be inferred from the three following lines, apparently intended as the commencement of stanzas:—

" All sounds are music to the minstrel's ear:  
 All sights are music to the minstrel's eye:  
 All thoughts are music to the minstrel's mind."

our cost and peril; but it is not easy (*i. e.* to numskulls) to write even a ballad well. I wish you would try *your* hand at one, and send it to *me* to correct."

The Life of Tasso appeared in the second volume of Lardner's "Literary and Scientific Men:" it is rather shorter than the essays on Dante and Ariosto, already mentioned; and if it appears to some readers rather less original in matter, it must be so to those only who are familiar with the ponderous memoir of the Italian poet by Dr. Black, to which our author, of course, acknowledges his obligation; added to which is the fact that in the "Rinaldo" and the "Amintor" there is comparatively little, and in the "Gerusalemme Liberata" nothing, to reward the quest of autobiographical meaning. Hence, while the translation and bearing of numerous passages of this class give a specific interest and originality to the story of each of those illustrious predecessors of Tasso to which we have adverted, almost the only poetical citation from his works is made for the purpose of comparing him — not merely in the tender reciprocation of a mother's love, but generally—with an English poet. "Between Tasso and Cowper," says Montgomery, "there were many traits of sad as well as noble resemblance — kindred genius, a kindred malady, and kindred misfortunes; but not kindred alleviations — the advantage here was on our countryman's side." Of the principal translators of the "Jerusalem Delivered," it seems proper here to transcribe this comparative estimate: — "Fairfax's version, in the original stanza, is masculine and free; Hoole's, in the heroic couplet, is easy and commonplace, but as a mere entertaining tale, the most *readable* of the four; Hunt's, in the same measure, may lay great claim to indulgence for any defect in vigour, on the score of the classic taste and learning which it displays. Wiffen's is unquestion-



ably the best ; and it is his own fault that it is not as good as any reasonable judge could desire — having chosen to hamper himself and encumber his author with the intricate stanza of Spenser.”

Oct. 1. Montgomery received a note from Earl Fitzwilliam, inviting him to spend the following day and night at Wentworth House ; his lordship at the same time kindly adding, that as he had been disappointed, on two former occasions, of the company of the poet, he trusted he should in the present instance be more fortunate, especially as Mr. Ticknor, an American gentleman, was then on a visit to his lordship. The poet accordingly went to Wentworth House on the following day. Among subjects of conversation with Mr. Tickner, whom he found at once frank and intelligent, was the success of the devoted American missionary, Eliot, among the aboriginal tribes of his country. Of the value of the labours of this celebrated “Indian apostle” Mr. Ticknor entertained a much lower estimate than Montgomery did — alleging that the fruits of his zeal did not remain ; and asking where could now be found the converts and the churches of which so much had been said ? “They are not lost,” rejoined Montgomery, “but exist in eternity ; and it is no disparagement to the reality or the importance of the labours of that devoted servant of his Lord and Master, that the evidences of his success are not continued on earth.” Mr. Ticknor inclined to the sentiment — not very uncommon, perhaps, in some quarters — that civilisation ought rather to precede, than be expected to follow or result from, the preaching of the gospel ; and in order to show that savages are not the proper subjects of such intellectual culture as some persons imagine, he mentioned an instance of an Indian, who, after he had been taught not only to read and write, but had made con-

siderable progress in classical studies and Christian knowledge, ran off again to the woods, conscientiously leaving behind him the clothes with which he had been supplied. This anecdote, Montgomery submitted, so far from proving the doctrine advanced by Mr. Ticknor, was against it in both particulars; for, in the first place, it was admitted that the Indian acquired not merely the ordinary elements of education, but made considerable progress in the Greek and Latin languages; and secondly, that so influential was the sense of moral honesty which he had obtained, that he left behind that which did not belong to him. The latter course, it was contended, might have been adopted by an uninstructed savage: Montgomery admitted that such a thing might certainly have happened; but Mr. Ticknor had adduced it as a result of conscientiousness on the part of the runaway: it appeared to the poet that the parties opposed to him on this point estimated too highly the inherent morality of the Indian character, and too meanly the transforming influence of the gospel of Christ.\*

The noble earl and his guest the poet attended together a Bible Society Meeting, the following day, at Rawmarsh, in the neighbourhood of Wentworth.

The 4th of October, as being the tricentenary anniversary of the completion of the printing of Coverdale's English Bible in 1535, was generally observed by the ministers of different religious denominations as a suitable opportunity for especial recognition of the

\* Mr. Ticknor recalled this pleasant interview to Montgomery's remembrance in 1839, by a long and kind letter from Boston, U.S., accompanying the present of a copy of Hillhouse's poems. "I look for your Hymns," says he, "every Sunday in the Selection used in our church, because I feel them to be the most Christian of the class of compositions to which they belong, and eminently beautiful as poetry."

great blessings conferred upon the people of this country by the publication of the Word of God in the vernacular tongue. During the week, public meetings were held in Sheffield, in reference to the three following objects,—the building of a new church; the Bible Society; and the Wesleyan missions: Montgomery was present, and spoke at length on each occasion. At the last-named meeting, one of the speakers alluded to the fact that even the Quakers had caught the missionary spirit; for although, as a society, the Friends had no formal evangelical stations, pious and liberal individuals were often found among the supporters of the missions carried on by other denominations. Montgomery, as the next speaker, took up the remark—"And *where*," he asked, "had they caught the missionary spirit? Why some of them probably in the very chapel in which we are now assembled! I recall, at this moment, the appearance of two young women, each as unobtrusive in manners as plain in her dress, who might have been seen sitting in one of the pews before me between thirty and forty years ago: both these sisters afterwards became members of the Society of Friends; in which character one of them visited Africa three times, and the other went once to the United States, as religious teachers." \*

Whatever might be his feelings as a *speaker* on this occasion, they were very pleasantly excited in the same

\* Hannah and Sarah, daughters of Mr. Spurr, a Sheffield merchant, were the persons referred to by the speaker; the former was married to the Rev. Alexander Kilham, the founder of the "Methodist New Connexion," after whose death she followed her sister into the quietude of Quakerism. In returning from the third of her visits to Africa for the establishment of native schools, she died on board ship in the passage between Liberia and Sierra Leone, 31st March, 1832. In 1837 a memoir of this excellent and devoted woman was published by her daughter-in-law; it contains a "tes-

chapel a month afterwards as a *hearer*, while he listened, for the first time, to his nephew John James Montgomery, who preached for the Moravian missions.

Oct. 15. *Montgomery*. “Mr. Roberts and I commemorated you yesterday by a visit to the ‘Buck Well’ in Sheffield Park, about which you have sung.” *Holland*: “Once a beautiful open spring, it is now only represented by a covered reservoir. But have you seen the comet?” *Montgomery*: “Yes; I *discovered* it on Saturday night. The Rev. Mr. Wilberforce called upon me, after which I accompanied him on his way to Park Grange: when we got into the fields, the appearance of the moon just rising over the hill led to some remark about Halley’s comet; I instinctively turned my eye towards Ursa Major, and in a moment recognised the stranger just over ‘the pointers.’ I literally shuddered with emotion at the thought that its appearance not only indicated a marvellous achievement of astronomical science, but one the evidence of which was at that moment patent to the humblest observer of the

timonial” by Montgomery, who says, “She was one of the most actively and influentially benevolent persons with whom it was ever my privilege to be acquainted.”

“Thy *light*, dear saint, gone out in darkness, sleeps  
Beneath that gulf o’er which the negro weeps,  
When, borne to bondage,—from the ship of slaves,  
His tears are wafted homeward with the waves.

“Hidden, but unextinct, below the dark,  
Deep bed of ocean, when the latest spark  
Of Nature’s conflagration shall expire,  
Thy *light* shall shine above the sinking pyre,

“And mingle with the innumerable rays,  
That, from the ransomed, round their Saviour blaze,  
When He makes up his jewels,—and not one gem  
Is wanting in his glorious diadem.

“J. M.

“May, 1833.”

heavens." He then went on to say that Mr. Wilberforce, who was engaged in preparing a life of his revered father, had visited Park Grange to ask Mr. Roberts for the loan of letters addressed to him by the philanthropist. *Holland*: "You, too, must have had letters from him?" *Montgomery*: "Yes, and might have had more, if I had not been too indolent to cultivate the correspondence; but I cannot now lay my hands upon them." He then added, in reference to a remark about the vivacity of Wilberforce, — "Vivacious! he was a most delightful companion; merry as a cricket: and he must have had something besides his piety to secure the respect he met with in the House of Commons. I can never forget the animation with which, on one of my visits at Highwood, he took up a recent number of the 'Eclectic Review,' knelt on the floor, and placing the book on some one's lap before him, read therefrom an almost awful passage at the conclusion of Foster's article on the Life of Hume."\*

In the "Quarterly Review" (No. 104.), published November, 1834, appeared a notice of a novel entitled "Dacre," by the Countess of Morley, containing the following passage: — "Human nature, it is commonly said, is the same in all ages and places. In these current sayings there is generally much truth *involved*, and but little discrimination. It might be said with as much of truth (both dogmata being partially true), that human nature is different in all ages and places:—

" 'Once in the flight of ages past,  
 There lived a man — and who was he?  
 Mortal, where'er thy lot be cast,  
 That man resembled thee.'

---

\* Ecl. Rev. 1808, part i. p. 15.

That is, the universal elements of humanity (so exquisitely touched and summed up in the beautiful poem from which we quote) did as certainly exist in that man as any.

“ ‘ Unknown the region of his birth,’ ” &c.

The reviewer, after quoting the entire poem, adds, “ These stanzas, which with some little allowance for poetical licence in the seventh, are as true as they are beautiful, go so far to exhaust the generic attributes of man.” To this remark the reviewer appended the following *foot-note* : — “ The ‘ Common Lot,’ by the poet Montgomery. We mean, of course, the individual properly designated Montgomery, and properly also designated the poet ; not the Mr. Gomery \*, who assumed the affix of ‘ Mont,’ and, through the aid of certain newspapers, has coupled his name with divers other additions not less factitious.”

This note having met the eye of the individual whose claim to the distinguished synonym by means of which he had been so repeatedly confounded with the Sheffield poet is thus called in question, he thought fit to address the following letter to his namesake : —

“ Lincoln College, Oxon. Dec. 5. 1834.

“ DEAR SIR,

“ I make no apology for thus addressing you, and if your writings interpret your heart, you will not think the less of me for my candour.

“ Attached to a quotation from an exquisite little poem of yours, in the last number of the ‘ Quarterly Review,’ is an allusion to me, so infamously false and disgustingly malignant, that every honest mind must revolt at its tendency ;

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\* “ Boz,” in his *Memoirs of Grimaldi*, calls him “ Robert Gomery,” p. 41. But *query*, is it not the same person afterwards mentioned by the name of “ Montgomery,” p. 276. ?



and I am assured that, whatever may be your opinions of my writings, you would spurn at the idea of being lauded at the expense of slander and vituperative injustice. The *first* review of my poem in the 'Literary Gazette,' in a direct note expressly said, that I was *not* Mr. *James* Montgomery, and though from some few advertisements, and the similarity of a name, I have no doubt that for the first two months a little confusion arose, it was soon universally understood that I was altogether a different person. Indeed, not a literary man in town but was aware of this. However, as I had, at an early period, published a rash (but *not* immoral) satire, and was now a successful author, those *characterless empirics*, who pander for the literary market of meanness and untruth, accuse me of enjoying an assumed name. Now (and I beg you to remember this), *publicly*, and in the most gentlemanly and *emphatic manner*, my then publisher, Mr. Maunder, utterly despised this, and until now, I have not seen this vile absurdity revived. In future (if we were to regulate the canon of authorship by these men), when two authors bear the same name, and *one precedes the other*, the latter must publish a transcript of his *baptismal* register! Now, my dear sir, *if it will be any satisfaction to you*, you shall be presented with such as will be sufficient when you shortly see my name as an ordained deacon of the Church of England, when every examinee for ordination *must* produce his registered name!

"Thus, my dear sir, will a word of honest plainness blow away this venomous froth; and let me add, that I blush for the mean and miserable spirit of envy, that can thus endeavour to blacken a character as untainted as your own, and a man, who would rather 'let the flesh-fly blow in his mouth,' than be guilty of what the assassin in the 'Quarterly Review' asserts.

"So far I address you as the *author*,—let me now ask you as *a follower of Christ*, if I am treated *justly*? Have you never known *struggles*? Have you known what it is to be *alone* in the world? to fight your way through all the clouds and perils of circumstance which surrounded an unprotected lot? If you have, *so have I*—in the keenest

and most withering sense ; and I call upon you, by the religion which breathes through all your writings, to address a line to *Mr. Lockhart*, and insist on my not being slandered in order to gild your name. No man, who is not degraded to the level of the lowest passions, can approve of this malignancy.

“ For yourself I have the highest esteem, and for your writings a kindred admiration ; but I, too, have something to lose, and something to reverence. Among friends, I number Southey, Sharon Turner, Lisle Bowles, and *many—many others* whose good opinion is to me the highest praise ; and I am sure they will all partake with me in the disgust I feel at this infamous proceeding, *and appreciate a spirit of candour and Christian integrity on your part, to remove from me, in the same quarter where it now lies, the onus of so vile an accusation.* I say nothing of the unutterable ABSURDITY of all this ; and did it not connect itself with social dishonesty, it would be scorned by me with loathing silence. You *must* allow that *mind* and not name is the source of all true reputation, and that poetry is made immortal only by the echo that answers to it in the heart of man.

“ Dear Sir, yours faithfully,

“ ROBERT MONTGOMERY.

“ P. S. My letter, I beg you to understand, is at *your service*, either for *public* or *private* use.

“ James Montgomery, Esq., Sheffield. If not in Sheffield, inquire and forward.”

Mr. Montgomery not being at home when this letter arrived, and the friend to whom he entrusted the opening of communications in his absence not deeming it of sufficient importance to be forwarded, the poet did not see it until his return. On the 15th of December 1835, however, he thus wrote in reply : —

“ DEAR SIR,

“ I found your letter among others, on my return home after an absence of nearly three weeks, during which

time nothing was forwarded to me, or assuredly your communication, as surprising as it was unexpected, should have had an earlier acknowledgment. To the immediate subject, it might be a sufficient answer to say, that I had neither seen or even heard of the paragraph to which you allude in the 'Quarterly Review,' nor have I at this moment any other knowledge of its nature than what your complaint conveys. Of course, I cannot be held in any way accountable for it. But I will go further, and state explicitly, that I have never had, directly or indirectly, correspondence or intimacy with any influential person connected with that publication except Southey, to whom, some seventeen or eighteen years ago, I casually mentioned in a letter on other business that, understanding him to be a contributor to it, he might, perhaps, have an opportunity of recommending to the editor a very learned friend of mine, as being well qualified to judge of geological treatises, should any occasional article of that kind be wanted. I do not recollect whether Mr. Southey in the sequel made any reply to this hint, for it was no more. My friend soon afterwards went abroad, and, in the language of Westminster Hall, I 'took nothing by my motion.'

"To Mr. Lockhart I am an utter stranger, nor have I the smallest reason to believe that I am anything to him but one of those cyphers among the million of contemporary authors who are never allowed to figure in his High Court of Criticism. From this I have been for many years banished, never having had the honour of appearing there since *the 'World before the Flood,'* and that is long enough ago, in all conscience, to satisfy you that I have no part nor personal interest in that quarter. I ought to add that my 'Christian Psalmist,' which was principally a compilation (in the course of that interval), was paired with Bishop Heber's posthumous hymns at the head of an essay on Church Psalmody, written with great moderation both of sentiment and panegyric, nor could the most jealous of my brethren discover a trace of partiality in my behalf. It is true that, as an absentee, on several occasions honourable

mention has been made of me; but to whom I have been indebted for these 'compliments' and for my exclusion (as Blair has it) from the 'Paradise of beatified Poets,' I have had no knowledge in a single instance.

"Neither my politics nor my religion were likely to recommend me to the favour of the conductors of that powerful champion of authoritative principles in both; but in justice, I am bound to state, that I do not think any prejudice against me on account of either has prevented my successive claims, during the last forty years, from obtaining their official sanction. Without abating a whit of my self-complacency in regard to the offspring of my mind, I have resolutely tried to believe that I have been overlooked by the magnates of the periodical press, from a sincere conviction on their part that my productions were not of importance enough to be objects of formal notice by them. On the other hand, my very *vanity* has always had too much *pride* to complain of abuse, even when it came from the fiercest and most reckless of the tribe — the Edinburgh Reviewers, in the youth and hot blood of the age of their reign of terror, followed as they have been at intervals by critics of every calibre, picking up their shot and discharging it through all kinds of deadly tubes, from blunderbusses to popguns; as fair game against 'one of the most musical and melancholy fine gentlemen who had lately been seen on the lower slopes of Parnassus;' and whose 'Verses to a Pillow' were only fit to amuse 'sickly tradesmen and milliners' apprentices.' I confess that, on reading the critique from which the foregoing expressions are taken, I was so angry and felt so vindictive that in the margin of the review I scribbled, in short-hand, the substance of an intended 'Letter to the Editor, from Gentlemen and Milliners' Apprentices,' admirers of the 'Wanderer of Switzerland,' and vindicating the author from his aspersions, and justifying their passion for such poetry. But when I had laid the book down, I called to mind the saying of the wise man, — 'The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water; therefore leave off contention before it be meddled

with.' I did so literally, and left off my controversy with the 'Edinburgh Review' before it begun. I never repented of the self-denial which this cost me, for I have not a doubt [a few words illegible].

"I therefore determined to persevere in my own way, taking whatever might come in it, whether evil or good, but never turning out of it in pursuit of the one, or to escape the other. In one instance only, did I ever notice an attack either upon myself or my writings. Some ungracious strictures of the 'British Critic' upon my 'Greenland,' ridiculed my ignorance of geography in laying certain scenes in a country where one half of the year is day, and the other half night. I passed over all the scorn and censure which he had otherwise poured upon me, and by a reference to any treatise upon the use of the globes, enabled him to ascertain that in the highest latitudes, and on the authority of well received history, there were but six weeks in the year during which the sun did not shine out upon the land. His mistake was so palpable that, waiving his official infallibility, he acknowledged it not uncourteously, observing, however, the same discreet silence on his other hard sayings against me as I had done. The truth is, that I have been an insulated individual in the world of literature, and being destitute of connections in any of its schools or parties, whether fashionable or popular, praise has been dealt to me as bounty by some, contempt or justice by others, and neglect by yet greater numbers of those who pretend to lead the public in such matters, and they so *lead* it as a nurse her child—by *following it*, and only holding up in the very way it chooses to go. Whether this has been good or bad policy, I stay not to inquire: I could not have accepted favour itself, even accompanied by fortune, on any other terms; and if little favour and less fortune have fallen to my lot, both have been honestly acquired.

"I am now too old to change my tactics, and am prepared to abide by the decision of the present age as to my claims upon posterity. If I have any grounds for the latter, all of mine that is worth preserving will be transmitted forward,



and last as long as it shall deserve to last;—how long that may be, I am not over-anxious to inquire. For hope is the best part of a poet's immortality,—indeed the only part which he can enjoy, whether he gain the substance or not.

“ I should not have troubled you with so much of what you may deem both impertinent and irrelevant concerning myself, if I had not felt some sense of duty to recommend you (if on further consideration than you have yet given to the subject, you shall yourself be convinced of its expediency) to follow my example of forbearance at least towards critical antagonists, and let them spend their strength in beating the air, which, without returning a blow, will soon make them feel that every blow returns upon themselves, and is dearly wasted at the rate of the labour in vain which it costs. If, however, as in the case of the ‘ British Critic ’ on my ‘ Greenland,’ you can convict them of mistakes, especially such as deserve a harsher name, you may safely do as I did, — simply send the irrefragable contradiction, by showing them the fact against fable. To contend with opposers on subjects of opinion, sentiments, taste, &c. &c. &c. (meaning by these &c.s all the indefinable points for judgment in literary composition, on which wise men and good men, as well as foolish and wicked ones may differ), is quite hopeless: time alone can settle such questions.

“ As to the surname which you and I bear in common, I have never disputed your claim to it, being perfectly ignorant of your parentage, and having no knowledge of any part of your personal history, except what I have learnt from unauthenticated rumours, or from records as vague, which have appeared in newspapers and magazines. But having suffered a fair portion of petty injury and a superfluity of petty annoyance from the confusion which has occurred among half-thinking people, by the circumstance of there being ‘ two Dromios ’ abroad, in the same walk of literature, I have more than once said, and said sincerely,— ‘ The worst that I wish to Mr. Robert Montgomery is, that some rich man would die and leave him a handsome estate, on condition that he should take the name of his bene-



factor.' Now, if wishing were not as idle as the Waggoner's prayer to Hercules to help his team out of the mud,—one of the most hopeless means of obtaining a desirable object,—I would not hesitate to wish *on* with all my might, till wishing, as prophecy sometimes does, had insured its own accomplishment. And this wrong I would do you most heartily. More I never have done, and less I think I hardly could do. A far greater, indeed, would be a compliance with your 'call' upon me 'to address a line to Mr. Lockhart, and insist on (your) not being slandered in order to gild (my) name.' Sure I am your own calmer feelings by this time must have convinced you that I could neither inflict upon you a sharper injury, nor expose myself to more contempt for officious and hypocritical interference. I have at no time, in any way whatever, meddled either with your name or your fame in public; and, in private, subject as I am in every new circle when from home (which is frequently), to be catechised concerning your relationship, whether in blood or only in ink, I have uniformly declared that you possessed talents sufficient to establish a claim of your own, entirely independent of any name.

"You state emphatically, and I wholly agree with you, that 'mind and not name is the source of all true reputation, and that poetry is made immortal only by the echo that answers to it in the heart of man.' Had your publishers been aware of this truth, or had they placed more confidence in it, they would have prevented two thirds at least of the discredit which has been brought upon both of us by their indiscreet annunciation of your intended as well as published poems as, 'Montgomery's New Poem;' 'Montgomery's Satan;' 'Montgomery's Messiah;' 'Montgomery's Omnipresence,' &c. &c. In all such cases they would have secured at once to yourself the honour due by the simple prefix of '*Robert*' to a name already known with another antecedent. I should have insisted upon this, had I been placed in respect to you as you were towards me, when you appeared as an avowed author; nor would I have suffered my surname to go abroad without a keeper,

and that keeper should have been my Christian name. I repeat it as my sincere conviction, that two thirds of the discredit which has been brought upon both of us would have been prevented had this common-sense mode of proceeding been adopted by your booksellers. I might have hesitated to mention this circumstance, though it is at the root of the matter of vexation between us, and of which each has reason to complain, but for the intelligence conveyed in your letter, that I shall shortly see your ‘name as an ordained deacon of the Church of England,’ after which there will be an honourable and sufficiently broad distinction on your part to make *that* the emphatical recommendation of your future publications. Beyond the grave, indeed, you may be the ‘Montgomery’ of the age, when I am forgotten; but as I intend to bear all my ‘envy’ (see Eccles. ix. 6.) on this side of eternity, it will not fret me to hear (I hope in heaven) that you are great on earth, and I in the sight of others as little as I ought ever to have been in my own.

“Meanwhile, in anticipation of your expected charge, my heart’s desire for you is, that you may be a faithful minister of Christ’s faithful word.

“I am truly, your friend and servant,

“J. MONTGOMERY.

“Rev. Robert Montgomery.”

The current year — so full-fraught with occupation and anxiety to the poet in various ways — is remarkably barren of original verse: indeed, we believe it is only printed as a date to a few playful lines entitled the “Blackbird,”\* written at Askern, near Doncaster. To the same period, however, may be referred the “Stanzas on the Death of the Rev. T. R. Taylor, of Bradford.”†

\* Works, p. 361.

† Ibid. p. 366.

## CHAP. LXXIV.

1836.

MONTGOMERY REMOVES FROM THE HARTSHEAD TO THE MOUNT.—  
 LETTER TO JOSEPH ROWNTREE. — DELIVERY OF LECTURES ON  
 POETRY IN MANCHESTER. — LETTER TO MR. NAYLOR. — LECTURES  
 AT LEEDS. — CHAUCER AND BUTLER. — MRS. SPURR. — INTRODUCTORY  
 ESSAY TO “HORNE’S COMMENTARY ON THE PSALMS.” — LECTURES AT  
 NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE. — MOVEMENTS AND CONVERSATION THERE.  
 — LECTURES AT SHEFFIELD. — POETICAL COINCIDENCES. — PARABOLIC  
 SOUNDING BOARD.

DURING a period of more than forty years, the poet had continued to reside with the ladies with whose lot in life his own had been so early identified, in what had become one of the dirtiest, dingiest, and closest thoroughfares of the town of Sheffield; but so long as *he* published a newspaper, and *they* kept a bookseller’s shop, business considerations at least forbade all thought of abandoning this central locality. But now, when the removal of the Iris printing-office had thrown the greater part of the premises out of use, one of the Misses Gales being dead, and another entering on the last stage of senile debility, the youngest sister and Montgomery resolved to break up the establishment in the Hartshead, and remove to a house at “The Mount” — as a handsome newly-erected pile of building, comprising eight genteel dwellings, and pleasantly situate on an eminence about a mile and a half west from the centre of the town, was called. These changes took place at the close of 1835; and although for a

time the poet's feelings were painfully exercised by the nervous disquiet of the elderly sufferer at being torn away from her long-accustomed haunts, a few weeks of fine weather, daily walking out, and the active use of his pen, produced a degree of mental resiliency which told advantageously in the work upon which he was then mainly engaged. We allude to the preparation of a course of six lectures on the British Poets, which he had been engaged to deliver before the members of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Manchester.

*James Montgomery to Joseph Rowntree.*

“ Sheffield, Jan. 12. 1836.

“ MY DEAR FRIEND,

“ Accept my best thanks for your continued kindness to our Moravian brethren's missions. Their needs are greater than ever, because their opportunities of usefulness are greatly increased. In the West Indies—by the abolition of slavery in its most odious and wicked form, that of property in the bones and blood, aye, and the souls and spirits of its victims, —even Jamaica, so numerous and urgent are the calls both from negroes and planters (the hearts of many of the latter having been providentially changed in reference to the preaching of the gospel to their vassals), that it would require double the means which our brethren possess to meet them. But they will continue to go on quietly, but perseveringly I hope, as hitherto, to take one step at a time ; do a day's work in a day, and be ready for the next step and the next day to the end, without undertaking great things by inadequate instruments, and in a vain and unwarrantable expectation of extraordinary pecuniary supplies, when they have anticipated such without due counting of the cost. Wherever a door is opened, and they have a message to enter, the good tidings of great joy they are determined to carry ; and, indeed, so many ways are prepared, and so much land is given to be possessed by them, that they need not —

and I am glad of it—they cannot, if they would, be too hasty and ardent to force their passage or conquer the peopled wilderness of heathenism in the slave islands. While I notice the absence of some names which have long appeared in your York list of our benefactors, I am thankful that so many remain; and especially I mark with affectionate and sympathetic emotion that of the dearest earthly friend of one who was while living a truly dear friend of my own, and a zealous as well as a compassionate friend of our missions. To Henry Bewdly, therefore, pray present my kindest and most grateful regards. May the Lord compensate him, in that way which to infinite wisdom and eternal goodness shall seem best, for the removal to his own glorious presence (as I humbly believe) of her whom, for a brief but lovely season, He permitted to be at *his* side as a life-companion, at a time when her life was so far spent that its twilight on earth, while he walked amidst its sweetness, was to herself the dawning of immortality, as sunset to us in the east is sunrise to them in the west. I had already sympathised with you and your brother, and the few remaining immediate relatives of your honoured and highly esteemed mother, having seen the record of her sudden ‘translation’ (I trust, because like Enoch she ‘walked with God’) to the kingdom of glory and of bliss, of peace and assurance for ever from sin, sorrow, and death. Your family has indeed, since I had the privilege to be acquainted with them, been under peculiarly afflictive dispensations to flesh and blood, gradually ‘minished and brought low;’ but you know—and I have looked into dear Elizabeth’s Bible which she so considerately bequeathed to me, that I may quote the passage rightly, at the close of the 107th Psalm—you know that ‘Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord.’ There is a striking copy of verses, in Thomson’s poems, on the death of Mr. Aikman, beginning,—

“ ‘As those we love decay, we die in part;

String after string is severed from the heart,’ &c.

He goes on to intimate that all ties being gone, the survivor

has nothing to resign at last but ‘breath.’ The sentiment is a melancholy one, but there is a delightful consideration associated with these bereavements on which he has not touched—that as the number of these beloved ones is reduced, the remnant becomes more and more endeared and precious. There are also far higher and heavenly consolations which I need not name to you, with whom I trust they are neither few nor small. I write this amidst the hurry and perplexity of recent removal from the house in Sheffield, which I have lived in for more than three-and-forty years, the distressing indisposition of one of the dear friends (Anne Gales) with whom I have been all that time associated there, having compelled us to make our flight in the winter; but the way of Providence was plain. We had fulfilled our days in that situation which was never my choice, but in so far as I was clear in my mind that it was the place chosen for me by unerring wisdom, there it was my duty to remain till the time chosen for departure was infallibly accomplished. The circumstances of my life, and especially of my location at Sheffield, have been very peculiar, and I have for many years past endeavoured humbly, and patiently, and thankfully to abide by my lot. I can say that I never have repented of this resolution, and God has been pleased to make his will mine in this case, whenever I have been in my *right mind*, and I had no surer or more painful proof that I was *not* in that state than when I have been tempted to repine or murmur. To your esteemed brother and to your excellent partner—long, long may you be united on earth!—give my kindest regards.

“I am truly, your obliged friend,

“J. MONTGOMERY.

“Mr. Joseph Rowntree, Pavement, York.”

The afflicted condition of Miss Gales, and the consequent daily harassment of spirit which Montgomery endured,—sympathising deeply too with the sister of the invalid, whom he considered as “the greater sufferer



of the two,"—formed a sad item in nearly every letter which was received by his friends at this trying period : his reluctance to leave home being only — and happily — overcome by the conscientious redemption of outstanding promises of special service at distant places. Under these circumstances he visited Manchester, Leeds, and Newcastle.

Having made his final arrangements with the Royal Institution of Manchester for the delivery of a course of lectures in that town, he wrote a long letter to the Rev. Robert Wood on the 29th, and another on the 30th of January, accepting an invitation to his house, and announcing the probable time of his own arrival. "I think I can be with you," says he, playing on the name of his friend, "before all the 'living trees' (*trees of life*, too, I trust they are) of the 'wood' have folded their hands to sleep, and dream of anything and anybody better than me or my coming — not as a feller among them, but to sit under their shadow, and feast on their fruits, and listen to their leaves making sweet music to the harp ; whether it be hung aloft on one of the branches, or touched by the finger of the visible minstrel, who, though one of 'the trees of the wood' (remember the simile is your own), is yet a spirit of health which can bring *out* of it airs from heaven, after having first breathed them into it from the inspiration of the Almighty which giveth her understanding."

While in Manchester he thus replied to a letter from his old friend and early partner, Mr. Naylor : —

" Manchester, Feb. 12. 1836.

"DEAR FRIEND,

"Your unexpected but welcome letter indeed brought old times — which with me were young times — to my mind, with such force that they have at intervals haunted me ever

since; though I am living here, and working too at railroad speed, and have hardly a moment to catch more than a glimpse of any passing subject. I had seen Dr. Henry the day before, and inquired of him concerning the welfare of yourself and your family, and was happy to learn that the report generally did comprehend *welfare*; and not what at my age I always fear to hear concerning those from whom I have been long separated—failing health and other providential visitations, that remind us, by perpetual changes, of that change after which there will be no longer any change, or any portion in all that is done under the sun. A change of this kind — not indeed the last, but the prelude to it — has come over the old house in the Hartshead, and lighted upon one of the three humble individuals who have so long tenanted it. A failure of memory, and some distressing symptoms which often accompany that, has happened to the elder of the two sisters with whom I have been domesticated more than forty years. So afflictive did this become from local circumstances, that we were obliged, in the depth of winter, suddenly to break up the establishment there, and remove to the outside of the town into a pleasant situation, where, I am happy to say, our invalid has been for the present relieved from the more trying symptoms of her complaint. Amidst the hurry, confusion, anxiety, and distress which this step necessarily involved, I had to prepare, as well as I could, for an engagement at Manchester—to read certain papers before the members of the Royal Institution. This, you may be sure, I could but very imperfectly perform; and here I am in the thick of the conflict—or rather past the worst, four out of six essays having been already delivered; but for the next I shall require every spare minute that I can catch, to bring the crude materials into any tolerable shape. Meanwhile, I have been so circumstanced, from the hospitality of friends, that every half-day of the ensuing week till Saturday—when I hope to return home—has been bespoken; and I have been compelled to decline more engagements than I have accepted. It will therefore be quite impossible to avail myself of your kind invitation; for I fear that I

cannot even visit, for a few hours only, my Moravian friends of Fairfield, though but four miles off. Accept, however, my best thanks for this proof of your continued good-will to one who never can forget how much, under Providence, he is indebted to you for confidence reposed in him in early life, when you hardly knew him, and when, in truth, he hardly knew himself. May the Giver of all good reward you both in time and in eternity for this! My grateful regards are also due to Miss Naylor, who once favoured me with a call at Sheffield: also to Dennison, whom I remember as a boy, but who, for aught I know, may now have a range of olive branches about his table: if he has, may they grow up to be all a father or grandfather can desire to see them on earth, and to be the children of their heavenly Father.

“I am, very truly,

“Your much obliged friend and servant,

“J. MONTGOMERY.

“Rev. Benjamin Naylor, Altrincham.”

The lectures — delivered in the early part of February — were well attended and well received; and Montgomery appeared to enjoy the quiet Christian hospitality of friends who allowed him to come in and go out as if he were at home. “I must not,” he writes to Mr. Wood, on the 28th of February, “let Mr. Jobson return without bringing with him one line at least of grateful acknowledgment for the comfort, the kindness, the hospitality, and the Christian privileges which I lately enjoyed under your roof. She whom you will call your ‘better half’ has her full share of my heart-felt thanks. It is Sunday; and I turn to the Sunday-Book — yet the best ‘Every-Day-Book’ also, as the world contains not another that approaches it in excellence — for a blessing for yourselves, and blessings for your children. May the blessing of God upon Abraham and Sarah be upon yourselves, as a son and

a daughter of Abraham in the highest, and holiest, and happiest sense,— ‘ I will bless thee, and thou shalt be a blessing ! ’ ” He then exemplifies this pious fancy in reference to each of Mr. Wood’s five children, praying for, and applying to them the blessings promised to their Scripture namesakes respectively.

He wrote to Mr. Blackwell from Leeds, March 10th, saying,—

“ I shall be with you, if possible, on Saturday night, but if delayed later by the coach, please not to expect to see me till Sunday morning, when I shall be happy to present myself before you, to partake with you and your family the rest and the privileges of that day. I was at Fulneck on Sunday last, but did not, till evening, recollect that one of your daughters was in the ladies’ school there : it was too late to ask to see her ; but the superintendent assured me she was well. At Manchester and in Leeds, by the testimonies of the councils of the Institutions in both places, my lectures have been so well received as to have commanded unusually large audiences ; indeed, in the latter town, they could hardly have been larger on the three last evenings. I may say, myself, that the audiences have been of the highest respectability, and I have been heard by all with a measure of favour and indulgence which it becomes me to attribute rather to their liberality than to the merit of my papers. It is, however, a circumstance not a little gratifying under the present discouragement of elegant literature, and the absolute depression of poetry, to find that persons actively engaged in the pursuits of *prosperous* commerce, are (so many of them at least) willing to spare an hour, now and then, from profit and loss, for the pleasure and improvement which may be derived (under better teaching than mine) from lessons on ‘ the divinest of human arts,’ as I have presumed to call that which I profess to expound,— and in my humble way to practise, so as, if possible, innocently to entertain my hearers. Forgive this egotism, which if anywhere in place, is surely so in a letter.”

A Sheffield Lady, Mrs. Spurr, who had been brought up a Quaker, wished Mr. Holland to ask Montgomery to give her a note of recommendation to some London publisher likely to accept a small book of "Lectures on the Domestic Education of Infant Children," which she had just delivered in Sheffield. He declined to impose the duty of reading such a manuscript on the poet, who, on being afterwards applied to by the Rev. Thomas Smith, replied as follows:—

*James Montgomery to the Rev. Thomas Smith.*

"The Mount, Feb. 24. 1836.

"DEAR FRIEND,

"As I cannot spare time to read Mrs. Spurr's Lectures through, I have examined, hastily indeed, but not carelessly, a portion of each, and cannot hesitate to say, that she need neither be ashamed nor afraid to give the public the benefit of her experience, observation, and judgment, through the press. So far as I am competent to form an opinion, the whole tenor of her plan for the improvement of the education of children,—especially by their own mothers at home,—is marked by good sense, discreet counsel, and practical illustration. Had the composition been less manifestly superior to common-place models, I might have felt it necessary, had I looked into the manuscript at all (which I should most reluctantly have undertaken), to scrutinise it thoroughly, before I ventured to commit my small credit to the hazard of losing it altogether (with the comfort of deserving to lose it), by thus favourably deciding on the merit of that which I had not half read, in respect to the letter and the bulk; but a few pages in any part of this were sufficient to satisfy me concerning the whole character of the Lectures. I therefore feel that I have neither done injustice to the writer, the public, nor myself by this summary process.

"I am very truly, your friend,

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"Rev. Thomas Smith."

Some allusion being made in conversation to the names of certain poets, whose works, however ingenious or instructive, had ceased to be popular, chiefly on account of the obsolete terms or uncouth expressions which occur in them, Montgomery remarked that "we must be content to enjoy the works of men of genius which have descended to us from past ages in many different degrees, according, in the main, with the measure of our understanding of the language in which they wrote, as their allusions are more or less familiar, their objects understood, and the circumstances which surrounded and influenced them well or ill understood."

*Holland*: "We find that to be the case with Chaucer especially; and hence while he is commonly so little attractive to the mere reader of modern English verse, he affords so rich and delightful a treat to the lover of black letter literature." *Montgomery*: "Our pleasure in spelling out Chaucer, and conning his pages like school-lessons, is very different from that with which even the common people of his own day, who could not read, heard his merry tales recited in the words of the author, or even retailed in substance, at second hand, in less happy phraseology: and we have greatly the advantage of our ancestors upward to the Conquest, in that we have an incomparably greater variety of poetry and poets downward, to yield us delight from generation to generation; each approaching nearer in style and diction, as well as in polish and diversity of themes, to the poetry and poets of our own day." *Holland*: "On that account, as well as for other reasons, our eldest English authors, and Chaucer especially, are generally heartily enjoyed, when enjoyed at all." *Montgomery*: "In Chaucer's language, when our ears have become used to it, old as it is to us, we recognise the infant prattle of our mother tongue, and delight in his hearty mirth, or his simple pathos,



moving instant smiles or tears, as we do in the fitful changes of childhood's moods, now crying till they laugh, now laughing till they cry, as it may happen,—unrestrained by fear or shame from giving utterance and expression to every humour of the hour." Hudibras was mentioned. *Montgomery*: "Butler is so droll and yet so dry, so grave and yet so ludicrous, so vulgar and yet so learned, so familiar and yet so profound, that while of all our poets he is incomparably the wittiest, and was in his own generation the most intensely entertaining, yet throughout his marvellously elaborate poem he is, to most readers of our time, one of the dullest and hardest." *Holland*: "And I should think a translation of Hudibras into another language would be unintelligible, if not an impossible task." *Montgomery*: "I said something of the sort in one of my lectures at Leeds, and was afterwards reminded by a correspondent that there is a French version of Hudibras by Colonel Townley, which is mentioned with encomiums in Lord Woodhouselee's 'Essay on Translations.'"

It fell to the poet's lot this year to prefix his name to the reprint of a work with the entire contents of which he had a deep and holy sympathy—Bishop Horne's "Commentary on the Book of Psalms"—which was issued by Hatchards, in their series of "Sacred Classics." Every one at all acquainted with the theological controversies of the eighteenth century, and indeed every careful reader of the biography of that period, must be aware how largely the fanciful principles of Scripture interpretation, denominated, from their leading expositor, *Hutchinsonian*, were mixed up with the earlier studies of the pious and amiable prelate above named; and in illustration of the importance attached to the gathering patronage and mistrusted tendency of these principles, it may be added that with perhaps a comparatively small

amount of direct influence, they indirectly raised such a morbid suspicion of infidel designs masked under the guise of Hebrew scholarship, as tended to arrest the success of Dr. Kennicott's laudable attempt to produce a more perfect copy of the Hebrew Scriptures, by a collation of all the known manuscripts. Had the Commentary of the good Bishop of Norwich been a reflex of the philological fancies or of the real learning involved in the controversies alluded to, and specially applied to the Book of Psalms, Montgomery's "Introductory Essay" would never have been written. But as the leading design of the right reverend author of this valuable work was to exhibit the sweet singer of Israel in the "beauty of holiness,"—to show how, in a sublime and unforced sense, the royal Hebrew bard is, by anticipation, the "Christian Psalmist,"—our poet's mind had been too long, too deeply, and too extensively occupied with kindred contemplations, not to hail with gratitude so favourable an opportunity of giving the right hand of spiritual fellowship to such an expositor as Bishop Horne.

It can hardly be necessary to fence the foregoing remarks with anything like a protest against their being construed into a timid apprehension lest Revelation should suffer from a collision with any demonstrated physical or philological truth. Montgomery, as we have elsewhere seen, ever cherished a nobler sentiment. In this very essay he says : —

"As for the alarm which some good persons feel at the progress of science, its actual discoveries and the imagined peril of pursuing them,—of what has the believer in the gospel to be afraid? The Book of Nature, however minutely read and explored, cannot invalidate the Book of Revelation. No truth can contradict another truth. It is one of the strongest proofs of the authenticity of the divine records,

that, though delivered long before the most extraordinary discoveries were made in every department of natural history, no fact clearly ascertained in the latter has disproved any fact clearly stated in the former. What is true must stand true for ever; what is false, must as surely perish — lapse into oblivion, having served only a temporary purpose, fall by another falsehood, or by an antagonist truth, or perpetrate suicide, self-slain by involving a contradiction. Truth is never to be dreaded in the cause of truth; it ought therefore, never to be blinked or suppressed, though particular portions of it are only to be asserted on due occasions."

In reference to particular portions of the Book of Psalms, the essayist says : —

"The reader will find abundance of discriminative as well as elegant strictures on these, regarded as literary compositions, in Bishop Horne's Commentary. This, without being curiously critical, or learnedly elaborate, to perplex ordinary readers, is accompanied, in the body of the text of the authorised version, with such occasional new renderings of the Hebrew phraseology as throw real light upon passages either imperfect in the translation as it stands, or obscure in the original; the commentator, with consummate good sense, pure taste, and conscientious scrupulosity, always preferring, amidst a choice of difficult readings, that which tended most to edification, and was likely to prevent false impressions of the actual sentiments of the writer, or of the justice, mercy, and truth of God himself, as in the apparent imprecations of vengeance upon the Psalmist's enemies, his avowals of perfect hatred against them, and his protestations, in some places, of perfect righteousness in himself. The whole work is evangelical in its spirit and in its influence."

Recollecting, as Montgomery did, Bishop Horne's amenity of temper, copiousness of imagination, elegance of style, and fervency of piety, associated with

his early love of poetry and music, he naturally adverts to the supposition that he might not unreasonably have been expected to try his hand at a metrical version of the work he has so admirably illustrated in prose. But had he done so, "it may be affirmed that no versification of the Psalms would have made its way and maintained its ground as that work, which it might thus have superseded, has done."

On the 12th of March he went to Newcastle-upon-Tyne, in pursuance of an engagement, to deliver six lectures "On the British Poets," making Mr. Blackwell's house his home during his stay in that town.\* The day following was Sunday. On the Monday evening he delivered the Introductory Lecture in a room, which was so crowded that upwards of seventy persons could not gain admittance; in consequence of which he agreed to repeat the reading at the Music Hall on Wednesday. Although this inconvenience did not again occur, the audiences were uniformly large, and the ultimate result satisfactory to all parties, the Philosophical Society having received 80*l.* for the entrance of persons not members, out of which they paid the lecturer 45*l.*

\* Mr. Everett was anxious to have received the poet under his roof during this, as on his previous visit; "but," said he, "between invitations from Mr. Blackwell and Mr. Fenwick, I am compelled to forego yours; but I hope to see much of you, and let you see as much of me as will be good for either of us. I hail your success in a new memoir of one worthy to be remembered: I have not seen it; but Sammy Hick will be as strange beyond the Alps as Hannibal was. Oh! that he might, along the route of that scourge of the old Romans, be made a blessing to their modern and miserable descendants." The book here alluded to contained an account of the life and labours of a Yorkshire "village blacksmith," who was remarkable for his simplicity, his piety, and his preaching; it had a wide circulation, attracted the attention of Southey, and was exposed for sale in the window of a bookseller's shop in Rome.

From memoranda made by Mr. Everett on this second visit of the poet to Newcastle, during his residence there, the following particulars are derived. On being asked whether any official formalities were required preliminary to the payment of his pension; "Yes," he replied, "the formality of attending personally at the Treasury, the Exchequer, and Somerset House; signing a certificate, and — paying 8*l.* 16*s.* for fees." The document produced at the second of these places was laid on a bundle of papers, which the clerk told him consisted of two million of Exchequer bills; a good foundation, thought Montgomery, on which to rest the hope of stability, so far as his pension was concerned. He was struck by the circumstance that, while in the office, a military man entered on an errand similar to his own, but with this difference in his case — the fees charged on his signing the certificate for a pension of 100*l.* amounted to 20 per cent. on the sum. Now here, said the poet to himself, is a soldier who has fought, perhaps bled, for his country, who finds his 100*l.*, his whole income, it may be, reduced to 80*l.*; while I, who never shed a drop of blood in such a cause, am only charged 8*l.* 16*s.* on 150*l.*: but, he added, a more whimsical thought struck him, on getting bewildered in some of the passages at Whitehall, viz., had he once been told that he would experience any difficulty in finding his way *out* of the Treasury, he should have replied that he was far more likely never to find his way *in*.

While passing through the New Butcher Market, Mr. Everett pointed out to his companion some fine specimens of beef. "I dare say it *is* very excellent," was the reply, "but I am no judge of meat on the stall, never having purchased sixpennyworth in my life — no, not even when I *kept house* in York Castle!"

On Sunday he went to hear Mr. Everett preach at the Wesleyan chapel; and afterwards, on being invited, attended a prayer meeting held after the regular service, remarking, when it was over, "I would rather be present on such an occasion, and hear those simple good men pour out their souls to God, with the freedom and fervency of habitual use of devotional exercise, than meet an elegant literary party. I am glad I was taken whither I should not have had the courage to go of my own accord."

Speaking of the remuneration of authors in past and present times, he remarked that many of the poets of Goldsmith's day were ill paid, and some of them had to struggle hard to live: that was, in fact, the transition state of things, between the patronage of the *nobility*, then declining, and that of the *public*, which was growing up. The subject has, perhaps, never been fully illustrated. In describing the strength and originality of Churchill's poetry, he said, the author was not merely savage, but sometimes ferocious, as in this couplet, which he considered the severest in the English language:—

"In every age, may every tyrant feel  
The keen, deep searchings of a Felton's steel!"

As the two friends were ascending the slope from the Scotswood Road towards the New Cemetery, they turned to look at the landscape in the direction of Ravensworth Castle. "There's a delicate picture," exclaimed Montgomery; "the middle distance, as it were, spanned by an aerial bridge, across which the eye travels at once to the blue distance at the head of the vale beyond." This rare vision of light and shade soon passed away; but instead of it, there was the new moon in the slenderest of its crescent forms, but back down-



wards, like a fairy boat; or rather, as the poet said, like the cradle shell from which Venus, shining just above, appeared to have escaped,—

“Effulgent in her beauty, as new born.”

It was his practice, when lecturing on the poets, to select for special mention any name of acknowledged reputation connected with the locality to which his audience belonged. He had, he said, been for a while puzzled at Leeds whom thus to specify, until he be-thought himself of Hartley Coleridge. At Newcastle, the birthplace of Akenside and the burial place of Cunningham, he had no difficulty. The name of the latter he introduced in connection with a tribute to the genius of Bewick, some of the touches of the poet, in his description of natural objects, being occasionally almost as graphic as those of the artist, which, once seen, were never forgotten.\* He said he had just been informed that Mrs. Philips was a native of Newcastle † : had he known that sooner, he would certainly have quoted a passage from her folio volume of verses, which he had once read through, in order to find a specimen or two for the “Christian Poet.” Mr. Everett remarked that a very pleasing volume might be compiled, in the form of a narrative of a tour descriptive of places rendered memorable by the residence or writings of the poets. Montgomery concurred in the opinion ‡, adding, “You would not find

\* We have heard him more than once in conversation allude to the admirable tail-piece, which represents the terror of a mother on seeing her child pulling hairs out of the tail of a spirited horse! It embodies a volume of meaning in an inch of space.

† A mistake: Mrs. Katharine Philips, the “Matchless Orinda,” was born in London. Vide Ballard.

‡ William Howitt, in his “Homes and Haunts of British Poets,” and Mrs. S. C. Hall, in her “Visits to English Shrines,” have both realised the conception alluded to above.

many local allusions in my poetry ;” a sentiment which his friend at once and successfully controverted.

*James Montgomery to Miss Sarah Gales.*

“ Newcastle, March 23. 1836.

“ MY DEAR SARAH,

“ Let me thank you with my whole heart for your letter to Leeds, which gave me more pleasure than I can express, because it contained the best intelligence that could be expected—almost the best that I could desire, and better than I durst hope for, though not so good as I will never cease to pray for, while amendment is possible in this world—concerning our dear invalid, your sister and mine, as I ever, ever must regard her. The Lord is indeed merciful to *us* and to *her* ; it has been manifest to me that He has so long been gracious, that I cannot but be assured, that though under a cloud to our eyes, the light of his countenance is shining upon her, and in the midst of trouble from bodily infirmity his peace is with her, and his presence, however mysteriously conducting her, will bring her by the right way—for *his* way must be the right one—to that home of blessedness which He has appointed for the reception of his children, and where, as their forerunner, our Saviour is gone to prepare places for them. . . . I arrived here on the 12th, and was cordially welcomed by Mr. and Mrs. Blackwell, by whom I have been as hospitably entertained, and with whom, much to my satisfaction, I am to stay to the end. That end of my visit, however, has been unavoidably postponed by a circumstance which, although thwarting my plan, was not otherwise unpleasant. The lecture room of the Literary Society there was not only crowded beyond endurance, but so many persons who had paid for admission tickets could not get in at all on the *first* evening, that after reading my paper to those present, I was unanimously requested to begin the series afresh at the Music Hall, by repeating it on the Wednesday following, and continuing the course there, which will unavoidably delay me into next week. The audiences have, so far, increased on every occasion ; and here,

as well as at Leeds, I am told that on no former occasion had such attendance been given to any lecturer; poetry, therefore, need not quite despair, though poets may, when they take the shape of books, and appeal to people's eyes: ears are more easily attracted, and kept, too, as I have found to my comfort. . . . If anything else worth relating has happened since I came hither, you may hear of it when we meet again, which I hope will be next Wednesday, and about this very hour, when I am in spirit with you at The Mount, and you are with me in my heart at Ellison Place—a hundred and thirty miles between us, and yet nearer, in the best sense, than we seem to be, when face to face or side by side.

“I am your affectionate friend,

“J. MONTGOMERY.

“Miss Sarah Gales, The Mount, Sheffield.”

Before leaving Newcastle, he breakfasted with Mr. Gibson, whose wife had died \* since his former visit

\* Vide p. 132., *antè*. In the Memoir of Mrs. Gibson, which appeared this summer, occur some details relative to one of those conflicts with the powers of darkness experienced by the pious deceased in her latter hours, which sometimes occur in such cases. The perusal of the statement in question deeply impressed the mind of the “Christian Poet” with the applicability of a striking passage in the Psalms, and which he afterwards used as a motto to the following stanzas:—

“*A Death Bed.*

“‘So He giveth his beloved sleep.’—Ps. cxxvii. 2.

“Her path was like the shining light,

Clear, calm, progressive, perfect day;

At even-tide came sudden night,

Thick darkness fell on all her way;

Amazed, alarmed, she quailed for dread,

And cried, ‘The Comforter is fled.’

“It was the Tempter’s ’vantage-hour,

Eager, and flushed with hope was he;

He knew the limit of his power,

Yet struggled hard for victory:

in the course of the past year. When the five little motherless children were brought into the room for family worship, the poet was much affected with their appearance; and when the Rev. Robert Newton made some touching allusions to them and their bereaved condition, he literally sobbed aloud. It was contrived by the friends of the "Aged Female Society" to hold their first anniversary during the poet's stay in Newcastle, and, if possible, to secure his services for the occasion. He consented to attend, and the meeting was held on the 24th of March, William Chapman, Esq., banker, occupying the chair. The Music Hall was crowded, an unusual circumstance for so young and unassuming a Society. Montgomery moved a resolution, which was seconded by Mr. Everett, to the effect that the institution, the object of which was "to relieve females in old age, and under circumstances of destitution," was "deserving of encouragement and support." After giving some account of the origination of the Society during his visit to Newcastle in the preceding year, he addressed himself to the general question, with the remark that, mistrusting his liability to nervous trepidation or excitement, he had brought with him an address written for and delivered before the Sheffield Society by himself some years since, which he begged leave to be allowed to read. This was done, amidst

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A deathless soul, at life's last gasp,  
Seemed but a hair's breadth from his grasp.

"The dire deceiver was deceived,  
That soul was in a faithful hand,  
Even His in whom her heart believed;  
Satan before Him could not stand,  
But fell like lightning to the deep,—  
So gave He his beloved sleep.

"Aug. 18. 1837."

repeated expressions of satisfaction on the part of the audience. He returned to Sheffield on the 29th of March, and some days afterwards composed the following inscription:—

*“To the Memory of Mrs. T. C. Gibson, of Newcastle-on-Tyne, who departed this Life on the 8th of December, 1835.*

“Life, death, and judgment, time, eternity,  
Exalted Spirit, now are known to thee;  
Life thou hast proved a flowery, thorny way,  
Death one dark moment bursting into day,  
And Judgment mercy, since among the Blest,  
Thee as his own, thy Saviour hath confest:  
Time and eternity thenceforth are one,  
Heaven’s glory crowns what grace on earth begun.  
Sweet were thy last faint accents, ‘All is well;’  
But how much better now thou may’st not tell:  
And yet the best remains, when thou shalt meet  
Thy loved and loving friends at Jesu’s feet.”

Early in April Montgomery delivered four lectures before the Sheffield Literary and Philosophical Society, on “The British Poets,” he having given one to the same audience, in January, on “The Present State of Poetry and General Literature in our Country.” This course, which had lately been received with so much eclat in Leeds and Newcastle-upon-Tyne, went off with less enthusiasm than they deserved in Sheffield, partly because he was speaking to an audience of his own townspeople, not collectively distinguished for poetical taste or feeling; and also because a portion of the members of the Society to which he belonged manifested a strong opposition to having the lectures at all, unless Montgomery would deliver them gratuitously, as he had done on former occasions, and in opposition to the judgment of his friends.

In order that he might be more distinctly heard in a room which was ill adapted for public speaking, one of the parabolic sounding-boards, invented by the Rev. John Blackburn, of Attercliffe, was put up over the desk on the platform. When the poet made his appearance in this curious "bonnet," as a former lecturer had called it, he proceeded to tell his hearers that on one occasion, when himself and a number of other individuals were listening to the full-drawn sounds of an *Æolian* harp, a very lively child who was present, and appeared naturally enough astonished at the production of such sounds without any visible performer, on being asked who she thought played the music, replied, "A little man inside the box." "Now," said he, "here is a new piece of apparatus put up to-night, and from which I am to speak. I hope you will all have the advantage of it in hearing, as I shall in speaking; but so liable am I to be disturbed by any novelty, even by so simple an arrangement as this, that I could almost wish the individual with whose voice you are already so familiar, could, like the little man in the harp-box, remain invisible while he addresses you." Of course, a fair proportion fully appreciated the talent displayed by their honoured townsman in these lectures. It was indeed a high treat to hear a poet of first-rate abilities, and one whose powers of delicate discrimination in the art were confessedly unequalled, explain the characters and capabilities of some of the earliest masters of the British Lyre, an exquisite kind of fellow feeling enabling him to enter, as it were by intuition, into the spirit which influenced his elder brethren in song; while such specimens of their powers as were incidentally recited, and of which the language was not too obsolete, came upon the listener with a vividness of effect derived from the all-pervading sympathies of the true poet, and which



rarely or never accompanies the more ostentatious efforts of the mere actor or elocutionist.

Something was said about accidental and designed coincidences of sentiment in certain cases. *Holland* : "I noticed, on turning to the 'Pelican Island' a day or two since, a passage strikingly similar to one in my poem of 'Sheffield Park.'" *Montgomery* : "Let us have the lines." *Holland* : "After adverting to the degradation of the ruins of the ancient manor-house of the Talbots, by the intervention of numerous tenements of the poor, I add —

" ' So with Palmyra's prostrate marble wrecks  
The wretched Arab his mean mansion decks ;  
Rich polished stones construct the vile abodes,  
And caitiffs haunt the residence of gods.'

Your lines follow the allusion to the animals that had taken possession of the old elephant skeleton in the desert :—

" ' — So wandering Arabs pitch  
Their tents amidst Palmyra's palaces ;  
So Greek and Roman peasants build their huts  
Beneath the shadow of the Parthenon.' "

*Montgomery* : "The simile is one which, in substance at least, I had long entertained. I think something like it occurs in my verses on 'The Molehill,'\* and afterwards in one of my political recapitulations, in which, contrasting the present race of Italians with their ancient

\* "Far in the regions of the morn,  
The rising sun surveys  
Palmyra's palaces forlorn,  
Empurpled with his rays.  
The spirits of the desert dwell  
Where Eastern grandeur shone,  
And vultures scream, hyænas yell,  
Round Beauty's mould'ring throne," &c.

Roman ancestors, the former are said to resemble the latter about as much as the toadstools which spring on the stumps where oaks have been felled resemble the noble trees themselves. I derived the whole, I dare say, in the first instance, from the splendid ideas suggested by the opening lines of Grainger's 'Ode on Solitude.' "

On the morning when the sounding-board had been put up, preparatory to the delivery of the lectures at Sheffield, Montgomery called upon Mr. Holland to go to the room with him, in order to hear how his voice sounded at a distance. The bard having mounted the rostrum, and his friend taken his place within "ear-shot," the latter was somewhat entertained to see the former lay before him a slip of paper, and hear him recite as follows : —

" O solitude ! romantic maid,  
Whether by nodding towers you tread,  
Or haunt the desert's trackless gloom,  
Or hover o'er the yawning tomb,  
Or climb the Andes' clifted side,  
Or by the Nile's coy source abide,  
Or, starting from your half-year's sleep,  
From Hecla view the thawing deep,  
Or, at the purple dawn of day,  
Tadmor's marble wastes survey ;  
You, recluse ! again I woo,  
And again your steps pursue."

" The poet alludes in the penultimate couplet, as he himself tells us, to the account of Palmyra, published by Messrs. Wood and Dawking, and the manner in which they were struck at the sight of the magnificent ruins by break of day." Montgomery added, " This stanza has been much and deservedly admired : it carries the reader to the most sublimely contrasted scenes

of solitude on the face of the earth. The couplet respecting 'Tadmor's marble wastes,' from the moment I first read it, struck my imagination, and impressed a picture on my mind as lively and affecting as that of the spectacle of Palmyra itself, which by break of day, in the desert, is said so to have charmed the beholder." \*

Mr. Holland showed the poet a very large horn of the reindeer. *Montgomery*: "What a branch, to have been produced on the head of an animal in such barren regions! How one would like to see a pair of such before a Laplander's sledge, or beside a solitary lake! What a shadow they would cast, in a moonlight night, on the pure white snow!" Landseer, the prince of animal painters, might be almost imagined to have overheard these expressions, so strikingly has he caught and embodied a similar idea in his celebrated picture, which was splendidly engraved, under the title "Coming Events cast their Shadows before."

\* A title to the earliest use of the simile in question may perhaps be claimed for Bishop Warburton.—Vide *Div. Legat.* B.V. S.I. vol. iv. p. 135.

## CHAP. LXXV.

1836.

MONTGOMERY ATTENDS MISSIONARY MEETINGS AT BRISTOL AND EXETER. — PUBLICATION OF HIS COLLECTED POETICAL WORKS. — LETTER TO JAMES EVERETT. — PASSING INCIDENTS. — SOJOURN AT SCARBOROUGH. — MONTGOMERY AND WORDSWORTH. — POETICAL COMPLIMENT. — LETTER FROM WORDSWORTH. — LINES. — LETTER TO EDWARD FARR. — INTERVIEW WITH DR. FISK. — LETTER TO DR. MILNOR. — TO GEORGE BENNET. — MISSIONARY TOUR IN WARWICKSHIRE. — DINNER IN COMPLIMENT TO DR. YOUNGE. — THE “TREE OF LIFE.”

TOWARD the middle of May Montgomery attended Wesleyan Missionary anniversaries at Bristol and Exeter. At the first-named place the chairman of the meeting was Mr. Bacon, son of the celebrated sculptor of that name, who was not less distinguished for his piety than for his genius. Montgomery, in his speech, related the well-known anecdote of one of the preachers of St. Paul's, who came up to the sculptor, while busy about a statue, and said, “You are working for eternity!” a sentence which he reiterated on the reverend gentleman with solemn emphasis. Upon “this hint” the poet dilated with great animation and effect. While he was at Exeter, there occurred a remarkable eclipse of the sun, on May 19th; an event which he has commemorated in the lines entitled a “Message from the Moon.”\*

Mr. Bennet being about to make a brief trip to the Continent, was very anxious to persuade Montgomery

\* Works, p. 354.

to join him and their friend Mr. Rawson on that occasion. He felt and confessed the cogency of the inducement in this, the only fair opportunity which might ever be presented for the gratification of a wish he had long entertained; but real or fancied difficulties supervened, and he gave up the project. Writing to Mr. Bennet, under date of July 15. 1836, he says:—

“On this journey I can only accompany you, as I did formerly all around the world, in spirit, with my best wishes and fervent prayers that the time may be pleasantly and profitably spent, and that you may love your country, your religion, and your friends the more devoutly and thankfully the more you see of other lands, less evangelical forms of religion, and strangers, whose faces, however at first sight you may feel disposed to like, and on better acquaintance to love, it would require far longer and more intimate acquaintance to like and to love as well as the old familiar ones.”

About midsummer appeared the “Poetical Works of James Montgomery,” in three neat volumes. This, the first collated and uniform edition of all that the poet at this time thought worthy of revision and reprint, comprised not only the matter of seven previous publications, but also above a score pieces which had been scattered through annuals and periodicals. The matter was also arranged under appropriate heads, and the price of the book was moderate, so that it had a large sale in comparison with that of the entire poems in their disparate form.

*James Montgomery to the Rev. James Everett.*

“The Mount, near Sheffield, July 20. 1836.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,

“After all, the principal cause which has prevented me from earlier returning your books is, that I wished to

add three volumes to them, which have been so long passing through the press that I did not receive any copies till midsummer, and since then have been harassed as usual with so many petty every-day cares and interruptions as to cause the subsequent delay. Since my return from Newcastle, I have been at Bristol and Exeter for your Wesleyan missions. Your cause prospers wonderfully at the former place, and in the latter the meetings were most respectably attended; and I never met with more genuine Christian hospitality anywhere. I am at present very much in the mood to complain,—but of nobody except myself. Yet since our removal hither, from the necessity of taking daily exercise, and continual employment of mind in task-work, set by myself for others, to mitigate the trials, personal and domestic, by which I am much exercised, my health has been on the whole better than for several years past. . . . But after all, the heart knoweth its own bitterness; and the misery which is incommunicable to another, because it can be understood only by personal experience of it, is actual misery to him who does suffer it, though it be what all the world beside may call ideal. This, more or less, has been my lot all my life; and it is now too late to hope to be able to lay it down. . . . Miss Gales and Mr. Holland send their kind regards: the latter ought to have written; but when I saw him the other day, he was too much engaged. I do not know that he has any particular literary work in hand. I have none, either in hand or in prospect; having for several years past relinquished every hope of either pleasing or profiting the public (Christian or careless), with anything beyond small occasional compositions or hymns. I do not ask what you are doing for the world alive and unborn, as, if I live long enough, you will truly inform me.

“Your friend,

“J. MONTGOMERY.

“Rev. James Everett, Newcastle.”

July 26. Mr. Holland went up to The Mount, at the desire of Montgomery, to hold a consultation rela-



tive to the proposed erection of book-cases in the principal apartment of the house: the difficulties in the way, were the opinion of Miss Gales that the wood-work would spoil the room, and the unwillingness of our friend to remove the picture of "Incognito" into a less favourable situation for the effect of light than that which it already occupied. It was ultimately agreed to put up plain shelves in a chamber, — in fact, along the sides of the poet's lodging-room, — Mr. Holland undertaking to spare him the unpleasantness of such a job by superintending the operations of the joiner during his contemplated absence. It was at this time that we first became aware of the design of the "Christian Correspondent." One of the volumes of "Fenn's Letters" was lying on the table, and, on its being noticed, Mr. Montgomery said he had been looking into it, to see whether any portion of its contents bore a religious character. It immediately occurred to Mr. Holland that a selection of letters, or extracts from the epistolary writings of the old nobility, divines, and others, exhibiting the character alluded to, would be at once interesting and edifying. This being mentioned to our friend, he replied that he had not only suggested such a work to Ball, of Paternoster Row, but was vigilantly on the look-out for suitable matter; some specimens of which he pointed to, adding, that he was not, however, himself the actual compiler.

He was also, at this period, engaged in making transcripts, as opportunity presented, for a selection of hymns by writers prior to the time of Watts. Judging from the bulk of his transcripts, — or rather by the number of pages covered, for the writing was small, close, and beautiful, — he had made considerable progress. In the course of the evening he read, with much feeling, several passages from a small volume of

Wither's\*, which he appeared to be going through for the above purpose.

As Montgomery and Mr. Holland walked from The Mount towards Sheffield, they met two individuals, one of whom, who was a sturdy rural preacher among the Independents, wished to introduce the other to the poet to thank him for some favour, as it appeared; but evidently anxious to avoid the interview, he passed on, merely saying, "Oh, he is very welcome," or something to that effect. "That man," said he to Mr. Holland, as they pursued their walk, "is a cousin to the late Sir James Mackintosh: Mr. H., who is now with him, waylaid me just before I entered Norfolk Street Chapel last Sunday morning, and introducing the case of the stranger, stated that he was in such necessitous circumstances, that he would be glad if I could do anything in any way to help him, however inconsiderable it might be. I told him it was not in my power to assist him except by a small pecuniary contribution, and giving what little money I happened to have at the time in my pocket, made my escape."

On the 5th of August Montgomery went with his old friend Mr. Hodgson to Scarborough, where they remained five weeks. While the poet was from home, Mr. Holland transmitted to him a letter which had been addressed to him at Sheffield, and the purport of which was, that the writer (who did not disclose his name) having seen the beautiful and popular essay, entitled "Mammon," which had been then recently written and published, in consequence of the prize of one hundred guineas given by Dr. Conquest for the best work on the sin of *covetousness*, was disposed, as he said, to appropriate a like sum for the best essay on

\* His "Hallelujah," we believe; a borrowed copy, for which the owner had given twenty guineas at Heber's sale.

some other important subject, concerning which he solicited advice.\* Our friend was not long in deciding upon a reply. In his mind there was one topic, of repeated occurrence in the New Testament, in reference to which, as he thought, the sentiments and practice of professors of Christianity were not generally conformed upon any very well-defined principle of interpretation. We meet in the Apostolical Epistles with such passages as the following: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." — 1 John, ii. 15. Again: "The friendship of the world is enmity with God: whoever, therefore, will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God." — James, iv. 4. Montgomery considered that these and similar passages must have an important meaning, which it was of immense consequence, in a spiritual point of view, accurately to ascertain; and the conviction of his own mind was, that a well-written essay on the love of the world, according to the scriptural significance of the terms, would be of great use.

Although the weather was on the whole fine during this seasonable sojourn on the Yorkshire coast, nor were there any external causes of disquiet apparent, Montgomery rarely, if at all, enjoyed a comfortable state of feeling while he stayed there. This was doubtless in a great measure owing to the drooping condition of his companion, whose severe but patiently endured suf-

\* Who the writer of this anonymous communication might be never transpired; the letter was apparently from Manchester. The writer, whoever he was, or whatever his object, addressed similar applications to Dr. Chalmers, Dr. Bunting, Foster the Essayist, and others. Montgomery thought it might be a scheme for obtaining autographs; it is difficult, however, to conceive that any person could be simple enough to seek the gratification of such a taste by such means.

ferings excited the constant sympathy of the too sensitive poet. Besides, our friend went from home in quest of recreation, or rather of repose ; but as he could not be *incog.*, the unpleasantness of having to decline to attend some religious meetings to which he was invited, and the necessity of appearing at others where the applicants would not be refused, kept him in a state of nervous excitement, only to be accurately conceived of by those who happen to possess a similar temperament. It appeared, indeed, that he did not, during five weeks of absence from home, and at the very spot where, thirty years before, he had composed the "Ocean," write a single verse of poetry. The two friends, after spending a few days at Hornby Castle, returned to Sheffield on the 13th of September, Mr. Holland meeting with Montgomery a few days afterwards in the little chapel of the Sheffield cemetery, both parties having gone thither on the occasion of the opening services.

Montgomery called upon Mr. Holland one afternoon, and said he wished him to come up to The Mount, as he had a curiosity to show him, — something which was too precious to be entrusted to any other hands than his own ; nor, added he, playfully, had he dared himself to bring it out with him at night lest some one might pick his pocket of it ! The object in question turned out to be the album of Miss Dora Wordsworth, which had been transmitted to the Sheffield poet through the hands of a friend, for a contribution from his pen. The book contained fewer offerings than might have been expected. There were, however, lines from Wordsworth, Southey, Sir Walter Scott, Professor Wilson, Coleridge, Campbell, De Quincey, and others. The attempt at a sonnet by Scott was characterised by tremulousness of hand, a melancholy tone of expression, and the unfinished state

of some of the lines — having been inscribed near the close of the writer's life. Montgomery read the composition with much feeling; and closing the book, "Here," said he, "we have almost the last written testimony of one of the most active and vigorous minds of the age, made in the very prospect of death, and yet there is not the slightest allusion to the promises of the gospel, or the prospects of the Christian; but instead thereof, an equivocal allusion to enduring the stroke of fate." The remark was evidently wrung from the "Christian Poet" by a consideration of the circumstances under which the lines were written. Of Scott's general character no man spoke or thought more highly than Montgomery did, bating always his abhorrence of the gratuitous profanity with which the "Author of Waverley" has unfortunately thought fit to season some of his novels.

We were a little curious to see with what kind of offering the Sheffield bard would enrich the pages of a book not only belonging to the daughter of the first living poet of the age, but containing, as it did, autograph mementos of so many splendid names. He took up his pen in a happy mood, and with equal taste and feeling addressed the following lines —

*"To William Wordsworth, Esq.*

"Immortal offspring thou wilt leave behind,  
 To track the waves, and travel on the wind;  
 In lettered forms o'er every land to spread,  
 Where mind expatiates or where fancy's bred;  
 Companions of the fair, the wise, the good,  
 Far as their mother-tongue is understood,  
 Long as their father-spirit shall inspire,  
 Heart-hid emotion, soul-expanding fire,  
 And, like the elements of nature, give  
 Life to things dead — life's life to things that live.

" But thou hast offspring nobler far than these,  
 Born to survive the heavens, the earth, the seas ;  
 And she to whom this precious book belongs,  
 Shall be yet more immortal than thy songs :  
 These, though they bear through every age and clime  
 Thy name and praise till the last breath of Time,  
 Yet must their written scroll, when he expires,  
 Drop from his hand into the final fires.  
 Oh ! then, may she, like morning from the womb  
 Of darkness, issuing from her long night-tomb,  
 Behold the terror with rejoicing eyes,  
 Caught up to meet her Saviour in the skies,  
 And with his saints, a glorious company,  
 Hold round the throne eternal jubilee !

" This for thy daughter, Wordsworth, is my prayer :  
 Next for thyself — mayest thou that mercy share,  
 Nor one that either loves be wanting there !

" J. M.

" The Mount, Nov. 3. 1836."

This courtesy was promptly and gracefully acknowledged by the bard of Ambleside in the following terms : —

*William Wordsworth to James Montgomery.*

" MY DEAR FRIEND,

" Yesterday were received at Rydal Mount, through the kindness of Mr. Younge, your volumes ; and the little book belonging to my daughter, which you have been so good as to enrich with a most valuable contribution. For these tokens of your regard, and for the accompanying letter, accept our joint thanks. I can assure you with truth, that from the time I first read your ' Wanderer of Switzerland,' with the little pieces annexed, I have felt a lively interest in your destiny as a poet ; and though much out of the way of new books, I have become acquainted with your works, and with increasing pleasure, as they successively appeared. It might be presumptuous in me were I to attempt to define what I hope belongs to us in common ; but I cannot deny



myself the satisfaction of expressing a firm belief that neither morality nor religion can have suffered from our writings ; and with respect to *yours*, I know that both have been greatly benefited by them. Without convictions of this kind, all the rest must in the latter days of an author's life appear to him worse than vanity. My publisher has been directed to forward to you (I suppose it will be done through Messrs. Longman) the first volume of my new edition, and the others as they successively appear. As the book could not be conveniently sent to you through my hands, I have ventured to write a few lines upon a slip of paper to be attached to it, which I trust will give you a pleasure akin to what I received from the lines written by your own hand on the fly-leaf of your first volume. With earnest wishes that time may deal gently with you as life declines, and that hopes may brighten and faith grow firmer as you draw nearer the end of your earthly course,

“I remain, my dear Sir, faithfully yours,

“ W. WORDSWORTH.

“Pray excuse my employment of an amanuensis ; my eyes require that help which Mrs. Wordsworth is ever ready to give.

“ James Montgomery, Esq., The Mount, Sheffield.”

The following is the inscription alluded to in the preceding letter : —

“ In admiration of genius, and as a grateful token of profound respect for the pure and sacred uses to which that genius has been devoted, these volumes are offered to James Montgomery by his sincere friend, William Wordsworth.

“ Rydal Mount, Nov. 30. 1836.”

In the autumn of this year, the following lines from the pen of Montgomery made their appearance in one of the Derby papers : — “ On the death of Miss Eliza Stone, of Derby, who departed this life, in the hope of the gospel, a few days after having completed her 21st year, September 17. 1836. — Being asked by her sister

if she knew who stood over her, she replied ‘ *I should think I do — my Father !* ’ She spoke no more.”

“ ‘ *My Father !* ’ was the latest word  
Which from thy lips on earth was heard,  
And fain would friends and kin believe,  
(In this rejoicing while they grieve),  
‘ *My Father !* ’ was the earliest word  
From thee by saints and angels heard,  
When first thy spirit saw, through grace,  
The God of glory face to face,  
Who with benignant aspect smiled,  
And answered from the throne, ‘ *My child !* ’

“ In his immortal family,  
If God indeed thy Father be,  
May he who bears that name on earth,  
Like thee, find death a heavenly birth ;  
And all who mourn thee here, and love,  
In turn be thus transformed above ;  
Yet, ere they win that blessing, know  
They must be born again below.

“ Sept. 22. 1836.”

Importuned, as Montgomery frequently was, to write verses on the death of individuals about whom he sometimes knew but little, and occasionally, it may be, cared still less, his good nature often yielded rather, as it appeared to us, to the perseverance of solicitude, than with particular reference to the abstract merits of each particular case. In some instances there were circumstances of interest connected with the parties concerned, or affecting to his own feelings, which led him to compose even mortuary verses with satisfaction: of this class, he considered the simple incident which suggested the foregoing stanzas. He had also been told that the young lady here celebrated had visited Sheffield only a few months before her death,

and had walked some distance to look at the residence of the poet, while her intense desire to call upon him was only counteracted by considerations of feminine propriety.

Mr. Edward Farr\*, of Iver, near Uxbridge, having published a "New Version of the Psalms of David, in all the various Metres suited to Psalmody," sent a copy to Montgomery, accompanied by a complimentary letter, which elicited the following acknowledgment:—

*James Montgomery to Edward Farr.*

"The Mount, Sheffield, Oct. 1. 1836.

"DEAR SIR,

"I must cast myself on your mercy, and ask forgiveness for what has appeared an undeserved neglect, on my part, of your kindness both in the expressions of your letter of the 3rd of August, and the accompanying gift of a copy of your versification of the Psalms. These tokens of friendship I well knew how to value; and if my heart without my hand could have sent through the space between us into yours the sense of its gratitude, the response would have been immediate, and I doubt not satisfactory, because, in sincerity and truth, I should have given you to understand that so far as you could estimate the success of your performance by my estimate of its merits, you would have been sure that you had not laboured in vain, nor spent your strength for nought, though I might not have gratified a poet's — and in this case a Christian's — aspirations by saying that you had outdone all your predecessors, and left nothing for your followers or *yourself* to do hereafter. Your communication reached me only a day or two before I set out on a journey of several weeks. I was suffering at the time, and am still 'a reed shaken by the wind,' but not one out of which Pan himself could make a length for his pipe: there is no music in my soul at present,—of course, no poetry, though within the last

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\* Author of the "History of England for Schools," &c.

fortnight I have been trying, like a bird in the moulting, to chatter a note or two ; consequently if I turn critic, you may expect little of the indulgence which, in my best frame of mind, I am always happy to exercise towards my junior minstrels who condescend to ask me for strictures on their early attempts. Such applications are so frequent, and in most cases it gives me so much pain to give (*I hope*) much less pain to my expectants, that I dread the sight of a new volume either in print or manuscript (for in both forms am I haunted), and read the humble petition that accompanies it with more fear and trembling (*I hope* again, and I should rejoice to think the hope was realised) than it was penned with. To come at once to the few remarks which I feel disposed to offer on your hazardous endeavour to execute with felicity what the greatest of our poets have partially essayed, and in no instance triumphantly achieved. Your version of the Psalms, like every antecedent one, fails in what is most desirable — perhaps unattainable — namely, simplicity, energy, and clearness both of thought and diction (to say nothing of impracticable adherence to the power, the pathos, and the conciseness of the original) ; it nevertheless discovers considerable tokens of ability to produce far greater and better things than this juvenile but Herculean putting forth of strength has accomplished. I have read over about half the work, and in every section find lines and stanzas of great excellence, and excellence of that peculiar kind most requisite in paraphrase (for such all versions must be) of these inspired songs. These, to tell you the truth, are the least ostentatious lines and stanzas of all, and perhaps the least likely to attract ordinary admiration ; being the most natural in sentiment, the most regular in syntax, and the least gorgeous in epithet. . . . The whole is worthy of revision, and will bear amendment, and this is not mean praise.

“ I am, your friend and servant,

“ J. MONTGOMERY.

“ Mr. Edward Farr, Iver, near Uxbridge.”

Oct. 12. Montgomery took tea at Mr. Longden's, with a party invited to meet the Rev. Wilbur Fisk,

D.D., president of the Methodist Episcopal College, Middle Town, Connecticut, U.S., who had preached in Carver Street Chapel on the preceding Sunday, the poet being one of his hearers. The Doctor spoke of "poetical inspiration." Montgomery denied, if not the existence, at least the value of any *inspiration* which was relied on apart from study and labour; adding, that no great work had ever yet been produced by an author who had not previously amassed the materials in his mind. On his being asked whether, therefore, with the requisite knowledge, he would himself sit down and, *having the will*, equally well at all times succeed in poetical composition? he admitted that he could not; saying, there were seasons when, however his own anxiety and the exigency of the case might co-operate, he appeared unable to do anything at all; while at other times he found his mind teem to overflowing with thought and expression. He said he believed that preachers, and, indeed, orators of every class, as well as poets, experienced similar periods of mental outflowing and energy. This, it was explained, was all that was usually meant by "inspiration;" a peculiar species of mental excitement, due either to the accidental presence of congruous objects, or to some peculiar stimulation of the nervous system, or of both together. The poet was quite willing to admit that, as a rule, it was only during some precious moments, and those not always at the command of the will, that even a man of genius felt himself impelled or enabled to pour forth his choicest thoughts in the best language: but the term "inspiration," he remarked, was ordinarily used as denoting a peculiar gift, a *something* to which poetic excellence, as well as poetic bias, was directly attributable, exclusive of that mental application which must accompany the production of every work of a high

order, whether in prose or verse. The influence of extrinsic circumstances could not be denied as operating favourably or otherwise in many cases : but he wrote nearly the whole of one of the cantos of the “ West Indies,” during as cold, stormy, and ungenial a winter’s day as any he recollected.

Dr. Fisk mentioned an interview which he had lately had with the Pope, at Rome, when his Holiness spoke with approbation of the government of the United States, because every form of religious profession was equally tolerated ! This led to a conversation on the increase of Roman Catholicism in England. On an appeal being made to Montgomery, as to whether or not he apprehended the ultimate re-establishment of the supremacy of the papal power in this country ? he declared, with some vehemence, that so far from it, the general information of the people rendered such a result, in his opinion, utterly, because morally, impossible. He admitted that there were occasionally conversions to Popery ; it would be strange, indeed, if there were not ; but these were, after all, in but few of the cases individuals of a very high order of intellect, soundness of judgment, or exemplary piety — though he believed it would generally be found that such of them as had gone out of the superior classes of society were in general persons of great amiability of character.

*James Montgomery to the Rev. Dr. Milnor.*

“ The Mount, Sheffield, Oct. 15. 1836.

“ REV. AND DEAR SIR,

“ I have unexpectedly caught a minute on the wing, after I had lost, as I supposed, all opportunity of doing it, to shake hands with you across the Atlantic, to thank you for your kind note of remembrance by Dr. Fisk, and to assure you of my sincere respect and esteem, associated with



pleasant recollections of the brief but lucid moments of Christian intercourse which we had together when you were in this country. There is ‘another country,’ of which all of every land on earth, that are *born* of God, become by that very fact *natives*—even a *heavenly* country: *there* may we, and all we have known in the flesh as of one spirit with us in the Lord, find ourselves at home and for ever with Him at the end of our pilgrimage! Meanwhile,

“I am truly, your friend, in great haste,

“ J. MONTGOMERY.

“ The Rev. Dr. Milnor, New York.”

*James Montgomery to George Bennet.*

“ The Mount, Oct. 20. 1836.

“ MY DEAR FRIEND,

“ I must acknowledge your letters from the Continent in not many more lines than their number, as they came time after time, like carrier-pigeons, from different places, appointing dates and stations when and where I might meet you, mind to mind and heart to heart, in the same convenient vehicle for souls to travel wherever winds and waves can waft, or feet or wheels can carry material bodies. It happened, however, that your paper-pigeons, instead of taking one continued flight over sea and land, from the point where you launched them to that whither you directed them, were caught and detained by the way; so that had I been the best correspondent in the world, as surely I am the worst, I doubt whether I could have despatched my return messengers in any instance so seasonably as to alight at your feet, where you expected to have welomed them. Be this my apology for my long silence; yet now, when I may speak out by those miraculous organs, pen, ink, and paper,—with which spirits converse at any distance, and in any language,—what shall I say, except that I thank you heartily for remembering me so well, and so often sending me tokens of your remembrance; carrying me along with you in the image-chamber of your mind, since you had me not at your side, in your eye, and within hearing, as I might

have been, and would have been, had not circumstances which I could not control detained me personally at home, or sent me with our friend Hodgson to Scarborough and Hornby, during five months of the interval. You had some advantage, however, from my absence, which your happy disposition to share all your happiness with your friends secured to you wherever you went,—your own enjoyments were a little increased by so often thinking, when they were exquisite to yourself, how much *your companion that might have been* would have felt delighted had he been with you to share them. I had, meanwhile, the sincere pleasure of sympathising with you in your experiences of every kind, so far as you communicated them to me in your various letters,—rejoicing with you when you rejoiced, and bearing *your* troubles and perils as patiently, not as cheerfully, as you did yourself—a mighty easy way of suffering, you will think, and think rightly; but then it was the only way in which I could suffer, and it was when all the miseries were over. Of myself I have little to say, and the less I say the better, for the best is not good. All the time that Mr. Hodgson and I were on our excursion, I was unwell from my constitutional malady, *nervous irritability*, accompanied by sad depression of spirit. Since our return, however, I have rallied a little; the depression is not so great nor so obstinate, and the irritability spends itself in fits and flashes of petulance, by which I hope sincerely—nay, I am pretty sure—that I am the worst sufferer, as I desire to be, and pray that I may always be, when I show even the shadow of impatience towards those especially whom I am bound by duty and affection to love and esteem. I shall not pretend to enter further into the causes or the consequences of my unhappy temperament in this respect. One glance at a time into the dark corner of a heart like mine, is sufficient for any friend to be allowed, that he may not cease to pity, and begin to—no, no, not to *hate*, but to pray for me, with more fervency, though perhaps with less hope, than he was wont. Forgive this unintended obtrusion of sorrows, which none but he who endures them for himself can at all comprehend, and even he very imperfectly. The Lord, how-

ever, *He* bears with me still; He knows my poor frame, and He knows, He alone knows, how far it is good for me to be *thus* afflicted. . . . Here at *The Mount* we are creeping *up*, or shall I say *down*, the 'Hill Difficulty.' You know our situation; and I need not say more than that there is no favourable change in our poor dear invalid [Miss Gales], and her sister is grievously worn with tending her.

"I am truly, your obliged and affectionate friend,

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"George Bennet, Esq."

Thus did this good man, even while constantly and conscientiously doing and suffering his Divine Master's will, under the influence of bodily indisposition acting on a most sensitive spirit, often "write bitter things against himself." Happily his correspondent was a man of a different temperament: fastidiously exact in his manners, and scrupulously delicate in sentiment, he was active, exact, and untiring in the discharge of the various duties which devolved upon him in his public and private station. Montgomery, after thanking Mr. Bennet for the prompt execution of a "troublesome commission" which he had imposed upon him, exclaims—

"And, oh! I sighed, had there been such a spirit in *me*, to do everything in the right time, the right way, and the right disposition, how different a being had I been at this hour, and how different would have been the retrospect of more than threescore years which I have spent under the sun in indolence, procrastination, and neglect of duties, and, as a just consequence, in regret, remorse, and despondency, without ever being aroused effectually to amend before it be for ever too late!"

In the same letter, March 30. 1837, he says—

"When I go to London, according to my engagement at the Royal Institution, I shall be very glad to accept of your

proposed hospitality, so far as to take refuge with you for the first few days after my expected arrival. If all be well in the course of Providence, and grace too, I will say, — for I must depend not less on the latter than the former, from day to day, in my precarious state, — I hope to reach town on Saturday next week, April 8th, in which case you may see me in the evening. My first lecture being appointed for Tuesday, April 11th, I cannot delay my journey, which I had wished to have done, till Monday, without travelling on Sunday night, which I ought not to do, unless I were going on the Lord's service; or else having to pass Monday night on the road and in the coach, and so landing like a shipwrecked mariner just before I must present myself in the best form I can assume, and with all the strength of mind and body that I can preserve for the trial, in which both will be put to a test so severe, that I tremble in anticipation of it when one of my too frequent ague fits of discouragement come upon me, and cause me to feel as impotent and hopeless as though they were fits of sea-sickness."

Partly on account of his delicate health, and not less so because of his peculiar home habits, Montgomery commonly found a considerable effort necessary to overcome his reluctance to undertaking a journey to a distance; and this notwithstanding his more frequent visits to distant towns of late years. As might be expected, this was more especially the case during the winter season, for the poet had always a strong dislike to cold weather. He therefore contemplated, as little short of appalling, a tour in Warwickshire, to which his Moravian friends had committed him, on a service pertaining to their missions, in the month of December. On the 22nd, however, he left Sheffield; and on the day but one following made his appearance at Cheltenham, in the place appointed (an old pump-room), as the only representative of the Society whose interests had thus taken him from home. At the time announced for the

commencement of proceedings there was but a single person present, with the exception of the kind clergymen who stood beside the poet! This aspect of things somewhat distressed him for awhile: presently, however, a considerable number of people came, and the meeting passed off much more satisfactorily than was anticipated. Our friend was anxious to have rested that night at Malvern, the fine hills in the neighbourhood of which he greatly admired even at this season; but at the pressing solicitation of Mr. Knott, he consented to return with that gentleman to Birmingham. On the Sunday forenoon he attended Divine service at the church in which the Rev. W. Marsh preached; and in the evening he went to the Rev. J. A. James's chapel.

On the following Tuesday evening a public meeting in behalf of the Moravian Missionary Association was held at Dee's Hotel: here Mr. Montgomery was joined by his friend the Rev. J. Latrobe, one of the Brethren's ministers, several of the clergy and Dissenting preachers of the town being also present, William Chance, Esq., occupying the chair. The poet spoke at considerable length, and with his usual animation; but his speech was rather composed of details in illustration of what had been done through the instrumentality of the gospel as preached by the Brethren abroad, than characterised by those flights of genius in which he sometimes indulged on similar occasions. Its effect, nevertheless, may be judged of in some degree from a remark of the Rev. J. A. James, who, after stating that he regarded the Moravian body with the veneration due to a church sprung from the seed of martyrs, and justly describing them as "evangelical in their sentiments, humble and unostentatious in their piety, distinguished for love among themselves and for charity towards all,"



said, he had listened that evening with feelings of the purest delight to the distinguished individual who had addressed them, and "who, from the time he baptized his muse at the Christian font, and made her a member, not of any section of the Christian community, but of the whole Catholic Church, had never written a line over which truth or holiness might blush, or which charity might not love to own." Besides addressing an audience in a large room at the house of Captain Raymond at Gloucester, in behalf of the missions above named, Montgomery attended a meeting having the same object, in the Town Hall at Burton-on-Trent; and he afterwards spoke highly of the clergy at that place, as well in reference to their general character, as for the kind manner in which they received the deputation, of which he formed, doubtless, the attraction. From Burton he returned to Sheffield, after spending a day or two at Ockbrook.

On the 22nd of December a public dinner, in compliment to Dr. Younge\*, senior physician of the Sheffield General Infirmary, and for many years at the head of the medical profession in that town, took place at the Cutlers' Hall. At this dinner Montgomery was present, not only as concurring generally with the gentry, merchants, and others of the place, in the propriety of showing this mark of respect to a highly-gifted and much respected townsman, for his valuable services on all public occasions connected with the

\* The name of Dr. Younge, though never connected with any publication of his own, was not wholly unknown to literature, for having spent some time on the Continent with Dr. (afterwards Sir) J. E. Smith, this gentleman dedicated his "Tour on the Continent," 1793, to his fellow-traveller, some of whose letters are printed in the memoir of the eminent English botanist, published by Lady Smith.



welfare, improvement, and prosperity of the town during a period of half a century, but especially as being chairman of the Weekly Board of Management of the Sheffield Infirmary, the long distinguished scene of Dr. Younge's gratuitous professional labours. To the poet was confided the duty of proposing the health of the noble chairman, Lord Wharncliffe; and he took the opportunity of showing how great, unwearied, and successful Dr. Younge's services had been from the foundation of the Institution to the present time.

The date of the following stanzas assigns them to this place.

*"The Tree of Life."*

" 'On my return to the island, when I walked over the ruins of one of our destroyed chapels, I found the whole space, though it had been burnt with fire, covered with the plant called *the Tree of Life* (*Arbor Vitæ*). Now, a new chapel is erected on the spot.'—Extract from a letter to James Montgomery by the Rev. W. Knibb, dated Falmouth, Jamaica, Sept. 23. 1836.

Isaiah, lxxv. 8. Haggai, ii. 9. Psalm, cxxxiii. 3. Nehemiah, ii. 17, 18.

"Where flames devoured the House of God,  
Kindled by Hell with Heaven at strife,  
Upsprung spontaneous from the sod  
A forest of the Tree of Life,—  
Sweet emblem of the sanctuary  
Which there had been, and yet should be.

"Now, on the same thrice-hallowed spot,  
In peace, a second temple stands,  
And God hath said, '*Destroy it not* ;'  
For there the blessing He commands,  
As dew on Hermon's Hill, of yore,—  
Life, even life for evermore.

"Dec. 22. 1836."

## CHAP. LXXVI.

1837.

PUBLIC MEETING ON THE CAFFRE WAR.—JAN TZATZOE AND THE LONDON MISSIONARIES.—MONTGOMERY'S SOLICITUDE ABOUT THE PROCEEDINGS.—DEATH OF ROWLAND HODGSON.—LETTER TO GEORGE BENNET.—THE "CHRISTIAN CORRESPONDENT."—CONVERSATION.—LETTER TO GEORGE BENNET.—CONDER'S "CHOIR AND ORATORY" REVIEWED.—OPINIONS ON METRICAL VERSIONS OF SCRIPTURE.—ANAPÆSTIC VERSES.

ON the second day of the year, the poet presided at a public meeting held in the Cutlers' Hall, Sheffield, for the purpose of hearing from the Rev. Mr. Read, one of the London Missionary Society's preachers from South Africa, and Jan Tzatzoe, a converted Caffre, "addresses on the causes and results of the late Caffre war." As the chairman entertained some apprehensions, lest the cause of missions in general, and the interests of those of the London Society in particular might be compromised by remarks of a violent or political nature from certain speakers less responsible for consequences than the persons above named, he was evidently anxious to pitch the key-note of the meeting in as solemn a tone as possible. After some general observations relative to what God had wrought in various parts of the world by the agency of Christian missions, he adverted to the times when good people were glad to meet for the purpose of hearing reports or reading

letters from those who had gone forth to preach the gospel among the heathen ; after a while one and another of the missionaries themselves returning, each with the glad tidings of what his eyes had seen, and his ears heard in distant lands ; subsequently, when whole tribes had cast away their ancient idols of wood and stone, of clay and brass, these very objects had been brought to this country as trophies of the power of the gospel to cast down all false gods. So signal, however, proceeded the speaker, had been the progress of Christianity within the last few years, even in many nations of savages, that their material idols had not only been almost wholly consigned either to the flames or to the museums of the curious, but the friends and supporters of evangelical missions had repeatedly been gratified by witnessing among them living trophies of the power of the gospel. A specimen of such witnesses of the truth was then before the audience in the person of the Caffre chief, who, once a roaming savage of the wilderness, they now recognised as a Christian brother. The foregoing passage will convey a feeble idea of the matter, but not of the tone of Montgomery's address on the occasion referred to ; and which he concluded by repeating, in a solemn manner, the sixty-seventh Psalm — " God be merciful unto us and bless us ; and cause his face to shine upon us," &c. We particularly advert to this occasion, because it not only exhibits the good man, at the beginning of a new year, in his most appropriate character — as the zealous and judicious friend of Christian missions, but because we happen to know that the immediate issue of the meeting happily accorded with the tenor of his special prayer in secret on the preceding day.\*

\* While, however, Montgomery was spared the pain of having, as chairman, openly to object to the course taken by any speaker

Next evening, and in the same room, Montgomery delivered before the Sheffield Literary and Philosophical Society a lecture on the "British Poets," being his sixth and concluding one on that subject.

January 27th died Rowland Hodgson, Esq., of Sheffield. This gentleman, whose name has so frequently occurred in this work as the intimate personal friend of Montgomery and his associate in most of his religious and benevolent exertions, public and private, was probably of all men living the one with whom the spirit of the bard held the deepest and the holiest sympathy: hence the bereavement, though long anticipated, was acutely felt by the survivor. It is due to the memory of both these devoted Christian men, and to the friendship which was so long sanctified to bear such happy fruit to the churches and to the world, that this page should perpetuate the tribute of respect which, from the pen of

on this occasion, topics were introduced in a way which he wholly disapproved of. Nor were his fears quite unfounded as to after-consequences. This very meeting, as several of the more discreet friends of missions, in common with the chairman himself, apprehended would be the case, was productive of considerable mischief and inconvenience to the cause of the London Missionary Society at the Cape of Good Hope. The name of Montgomery, as chairman, gave a degree of importance to the proceedings in the minds of persons at a distance, though in reality he consented to preside not as approving what turned out to be the object of certain parties concerned, but in the hope that he might be able, by his presence and influence, to control some of those intemperate elements of the meeting, which it might be supposed were little likely to yield to less authoritative interference. On the report of this meeting — and of others of an analogous but more violent character, held in other parts of the kingdom — reaching Africa, several letters, reprehending and charging as *exparte*, certain of the speakers, appeared in the "Graham's Town Journal;" and on the 1st of May, the same year, this sentiment was embodied in a resolution at the annual meeting of the Graham's Town Auxiliary of the London Missionary Society.

Montgomery, appeared in the Sheffield newspapers on the death of Mr. Hodgson : — “ His name alone, with this mournful annunciation, will suffice at present to make his removal felt, not by his relatives, friends, and townspeople only, but extensively throughout the kingdom and in far lands, as the bereavement of that kind which a private circle, a local community, and even the Church of Christ, can seldom indeed be called upon to sustain ; and which can only be compensated to all who suffer from it by that gracious Providence which so eminently endowed him with gifts and graces to exercise himself indefatigably in works of faith and labours of love, in every department of social and public life which he adorned and benefited beyond most of his contemporaries. Of him it might be emphatically said, that it was the tenor of his whole conduct to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with his God. He departed in peace in the 64th year of his age.”

*James Montgomery to George Bennet.*

“ The Mount, Jan. 27. 1837.

“ MY DEAR FRIEND,

“ These lines must be few, but they bear the heaviest burthen with which I have ever had to charge a letter to you. Before I name the occasion, you will already have anticipated it. This day at noon our endeared and inestimable friend Rowland Hodgson entered into the joy of his Lord. After such a life of suffering, what must the first moment be to the redeemed spirit emancipated from that house of bondage, the perishing body, and brought indeed into the glorious liberty of the children of God, in the very kingdom of his Father and the personal presence of that Saviour whom while unseen he loved, and in whom, now that he does see Him eye to eye, he rejoices and shall for ever rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory ! To us who

are still strangers and pilgrims on earth, yet, I humbly hope, inquiring our way to Zion, with our faces thitherward and our hearts already there, where our treasure is—or we are utterly, hopelessly, and everlastingly poor—the world, as I sung ten years ago, in a poem commenced in mind in our late friend's carriage while we were travelling together, the world to me ‘grows darker, lonelier, and more silent, as I descend into the vale of years.’ One light which has long cheered, and I may say accompanied, me through one third of my way of life, is now gone out—no, no, not *out*, it has passed *on* before through the shadow of death into the splendour of eternity: but I shall miss it; and O! how many more whom its mild beams were wont to bless will miss it too! But the Lord liveth,—He gave and He has taken away—blessed be his name! To none but Him would we have surrendered it, and submitted to the bereavement. But He who doeth all things well, cannot have done otherwise in respect to us on this occasion; while the departed, whom we must lament on our own account as frail human creatures, how has he already learnt that all things while he was in the body *did*, moment by moment, without intermission, work together for *his* good! and why?—ah! there is the point that concerns us as survivors, if we would secure the same blessedness for ourselves,—*because he loved God*. So may *we*, and so may the Lord help *us* to do! I am too much bewildered with the effect of this stroke, which, though I have been expecting it from day to day for three weeks past, yet stunned my faculties as though it were sudden. Death always *is* sudden when it comes at last; for, how long or how much soever foreseen and apprehended, the *reality* of it is as different from the anticipation as life and death are themselves distinct. Forgive, therefore, the little coherence of the foregoing remarks, which are but the imperfect expression of feelings and sentiments, themselves but momentary fragments crowding and flitting away, while the mind is scarcely more than passively conscious, and the heart hardly yet sensible of the actual distress that for a long time—if time be yet allowed to me much longer—must afflict it



when the loss which I have sustained comes to be *experienced*: at present it is but known as a fact — as that which has occurred and never can be reversed. I must give over. I did not intend to touch this page, but as I am forced upon it, I will just add that our friends at Park Grange within these two days have been visited with the prevailing influenza. Thousands of families here are afflicted by it, so far as I can learn; but, on the whole, the symptoms appear to be milder than they have manifested themselves in your great city. None of our connexions, I believe, have been severely handled by it. We have escaped in this house hitherto.

“ I am truly, your affectionate friend,

“ J. MONTGOMERY.

“ George Bennet, Esq., Grove Place, Hackney.”

Mr. Bennet has written upon this letter “ R. Hodgson is gone to *his Lord*. Oh! for grace to follow him, as he followed our common Lord.”

At the beginning of February appeared the “ Christian Correspondent: Letters, private and confidential, addressed to Relatives and others, by pious Persons of both Sexes, eminent for their Talents, or peculiar Circumstances in Life, exemplifying the Fruits of Holy Living, and the blessedness of Holy Dying.” These letters, forming three volumes, were introduced by a “ Preliminary Essay ” from the pen of Montgomery — at whose suggestion, indeed, the work itself was undertaken by the publishers, to one of whom he had casually remarked, when in London, that in the course of his multifarious reading, he had often met with letters by people, great and good in their day, which, though never intended for any eyes but those of their respective correspondents, were, nevertheless, often the more interesting and precious on that very account; and especially were they worthy of preservation, as introducing us into the privacy of distinguished indi-

viduals, who, on general occasions, acted, spoke, wrote, and even thought as in the sight and audience of their contemporaries, and of posterity; consequently, in some measure, at least, under restraint. In the freedom of epistolary intercourse, they poured into the faithful ear of friends and kindred their joys and their sorrows; and showed themselves, as they appeared in their families and amidst society at large, men of like passions with ourselves, engaged in the business, the cares, and the charities of ordinary life; at the same time, by glimpses and allusions, unconsciously revealing the inmost secrets of their hearts; and this, whether the topics are religious or otherwise—so that at the distance of centuries they may be known, not only as they desired to be seen, or even as they were seen by their every-day and incurious acquaintance, but as they actually were *in* themselves and *to* themselves. It was moreover truly intimated at the same time, that the familiar letters of illustrious individuals of bygone times, who may be known otherwise only by the imperfect records of history—the overcharged portraits drawn of them by biographers, or (if authors) perhaps by their own elaborate literary performances, have an interest exceedingly attractive, and afford intelligence concerning the writers, which is not only gratifying to innocent curiosity, but delightfully and practically instructive to those who love to study human nature in its elements and eccentricities—to trace its general correspondence and its individual diversities. It is thus that one mind is compared with another mind as contemplated under similar aspects; while each is brought to the test of our own reason, so far as self-knowledge, experience, and observation enable us to judge with candour and impartiality.

We believe that Montgomery's colleague in this un-

dertaking, so far as the selection of the larger portion of the matter, and the arrangement of the whole is concerned, was Mr. Henry Rogers, whose contributions to the "Edinburgh Review" have been separately printed, and who has gained deserved popularity from his "Eclipse of Faith." The letters are selected with discrimination and taste; and were, on the whole, satisfactory to the originator of the work. He was, at first, inclined to doubt the advantage of distributing them under certain general heads with reference to *subject*, instead of arranging them simply according to their *dates*; but on reconsidering the matter, he appeared to coincide with the views of the editor in favour of a classification. The "Preliminary Essay" displays in a considerable degree, that delicate perception of the latent beauties of the materials before him, and that peculiar felicity in pointing them out, which had characterised his efforts in previous compositions of a like nature. The matter of the essay is altogether interesting — much of it delightfully so; and this notwithstanding a possibility that the reader may occasionally be liable, while perusing some of the finer passages, to admit for a moment the thought that the disquisition with which he is delighted is rather engrafted *upon* than arises *out of* the obvious nature and relations of the subject. The original draught of the essay contained some remarks on testamentary documents, which were omitted in the copy prepared for the press.

The leading idea, which appears to have been present to the mind of the author, was, that —

"In confidential epistolary correspondence, people are more really themselves than in any other way of exercising their faculties in reference to their fellow-creatures; and

these memorials," he adds, "have the advantage, not only of being

‘ Warm from the heart, and faithful to its fires,’

but they are positive acts, not mere records; and the revealing of the writers in their real characters, though, perhaps, as imperceptible, is yet as gradual and manifest, at comparative intervals, as any of the operations of nature throughout the animal or vegetable kingdoms, in the growth of what is palpable, and the development of what is concealed." . . .

"Whatever a man says of himself is genuine; whether it be true or false, it is equally his own. Even in hypocrisy he is no hypocrite, for deceit is natural; if he assumes a virtue which he has not, he exposes a vice which he has; if he pretends to talents which he does not possess, he disproves his claim by the inability with which he asserts it. One part of his character he may conceal, but the very act of concealment betrays another; if he cover his breast with both his hands, he may be showing us that they are not clean; if he turns away his head to hide his face, perhaps he is discovering to us his baldness behind. Let him represent himself as he will, we shall see him more clearly as he is than any other man could have represented him."

It is the opinion of Thomas De Quincey (the "English Opium Eater") that "amongst all the celebrated letter-writers of past or present times, a large overbalance happens to have been men;" at the same time he admits that, "more frequently women write from their hearts — and this very cause operates to make female letters good."

Our essayist appears to have entertained a similar opinion, for towards the close of a section in reply to the question, "why are the letters of women, for the most part, more frank and agreeable than those of men?" he says, "where they give their confidence at all, they give it heartily."

As the collection consists exclusively of letters written by "pious persons," the essayist was led to advert to the earliest instances of intercommunication between individuals by this mode of writing, mentioned in the Scriptures; and more especially to the degree in which the epistolary form characterises the books of the New Testament.\* In this department of his subject Montgomery was peculiarly at home: his pure taste, pious feeling, and large experience in religious literature—may we be allowed to add, of religion itself!—enabled him to throw, as it were, a halo of sacred importance around these uninspired records of holy living, holy suffering, and holy dying. In this work, the compiler unconsciously appropriated a title already in use†, and also unintentionally suggested the reprinting of a rare and valuable volume of ancient date, comprising a series of epistles, hardly less interesting on account of their peculiarities of style, than precious for the clear and faithful testimony which the writers of them bear to the truth and influence of the gospel under the most trying circumstances in which human nature can be placed.‡

Mr. Holland having given Montgomery a little

\* "It has pleased God, in his wisdom and condescension, to communicate the greater portion of the didactic records of his will, under the gospel dispensation, in a series of epistles, exemplifying all the characteristics of frank, cordial, and desultory letters, by holy men of God, who wrote as they were inspired by the Holy Ghost."

† The "Christian Correspondent," a series of letters addressed by the Rev. John Newton to Capt. Alex. Clunie, in 1770. Hull, 1790.

‡ Coverdale's "Letters of the Martyrs," with Introductory Essay by the Rev. Edward Bickersteth, 1837. This work was pointed out to Montgomery by his friend the Rev. Joseph Hunter; but he could never obtain a sight of the original edition.



volume of poems, including one entitled the "Village Font," it was noticed that the rhyming words, in the first and third lines in the following stanza, were dashed with a pencil: —

"So, Time hath spared that ancient font,  
Though worn by many an age;  
Though threatened with full many a taunt  
By ignorant rabble rage,  
It scaped, secure, rebellion's brand,  
And reformation's milder hand."

*Holland*: "I perceive, sir, what you mean by these marks; but, as *you* once confessed, 'I was hampered for a rhyme.'" *Montgomery*: "'Tis *not* a rhyme, but a word I would not have so used had I been writing on such a subject." *Holland*: "I suspect, sir, you would have been as little likely to meddle with the subject as to use the rhyme: I presume you have hardly ever been brought in contact with a font since you were yourself christened." *Montgomery*: "You are very much mistaken." *Holland*: "Why, did you ever officiate as a godfather?" *Montgomery*: "Yes, sir, I did, at Ockbrook church; only a few years ago I consented to stand as sponsor at the baptism of the child of Mr. Connor, one of our Moravian ministers." *Holland*: "The poet at the christening of 'O'Connor's child' — that were a poetical incident!" *Montgomery*: "The child was named after me *James*; and some time since, when I was at Ockbrook, I gave the little fellow a book, in which I had inscribed some infantine rhymes, to please him, when he should be able to read them." Writing to the Rev. Robert Wood on the 6th of February, Montgomery says: "My old and faithful friend, Mr. Rowland Hodgson, a few days ago was called home, as we poor Moravians say, when we are in our right frame



of spirit as children of God in Christ Jesus. This has thrown upon me some responsibility which he used to undertake in getting up a meeting at Sheffield in behalf of our Missionary Society in the course of this month, when our bishop Hallbeck from South Africa is expected here. I am further engaged in recomposing, to suit a metropolitan audience, the six lectures on the British Poets which I delivered in Manchester last year."

On the 16th of February a public meeting was held at the Cutlers' Hall, Sheffield, for the purpose of making a collection in aid of the missions of the United Brethren in various parts of the world, and at the same time of hearing details relative to their success from the Rev. H. P. Hallbeck, a bishop of the Brethren's church, who had been many years in Africa. Montgomery naturally felt great interest in the result; and on the present occasion he spoke at considerable length, adverting, with much feeling, to the part his late friend Mr. Hodgson used to take in these meetings; and who had extended the effects of his good-will even beyond his life, by leaving to this as well as to several kindred institutions with which he had been connected, the sum of one hundred guineas each by will.\*

*James Montgomery to George Bennet.*

"The Mount, Sheffield, Feb. 28. 1837.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"A man owes some duties to himself, and I in general so faithfully neglect mine, that were I anybody else's servant than my own, I should be turned off without a character. There are, however, occasions when something so much like

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\* The sum of 35*l.* 13*s.* 6*d.* was collected in the room; and, curiously enough, exactly the same amount was contributed privately, through the hands of Montgomery.

compulsion — necessity, I believe, is the right name for it — is laid upon me, that I am roused to make a feeble attempt to promote my personal interest, though few things are more repugnant to pride and self-will than to take steps which common prudence dictates, and even honourable feeling sanctions. Without further preamble — I am engaged to deliver six lectures on the British Poets (original compositions of course, and entirely different from those formerly delivered and afterwards published) at the *Royal Institution* between the second week in April and the third in May. As this will occupy a considerable portion of time, and I shall have much to spare, with no opportunity of otherwise profitably occupying it, I wish to ascertain whether the Council of the *London Institution* would be willing to make an engagement with me for either *four* or *six* lectures during my visit to the metropolis. As for terms, forty guineas for the six, or thirty guineas for the four, would, I trust, not be deemed unreasonable. All that I request of you to do is, — if you have the opportunity, and it be not disagreeable to yourself, — that you would find means to make the intimation known to some leading person in the Institution, so that it might be laid before the Council for their consideration. . . . On Saturday last I forwarded to you a copy of the ‘*Sheffield Mercury*,’ in which you would find some commemorative stanzas, by me, of our late dear friend R. H [Hodgson]. He has bequeathed in his will the sum of nineteen guineas each to several of his friends — among the rest, the surviving *three* of the *four* — for the purchase of a ring, or any other memorial of him, the first, though the youngest, who has been called to his account.

“I am truly your friend,

“J. MONTGOMERY.

“George Bennet, Esq., Grove Place, Hackney.”

In the early part of this year Montgomery found himself once more, and somewhat unexpectedly, in harness as a reviewer. The management of the “*Eclectic Review*” having been transferred from Josiah Conder to the Rev. T. Price, D.D., a minister of the Baptist

denomination, the latter gentleman wrote to the Sheffield poet, soliciting him to render or recommend literary assistance. Decidedly averse, at this time, to such an engagement on his own part, he not only mentioned the proposal to an individual to whom he thought such occupation would be suitable, but, as it appeared, had calculated with so much confidence upon the concurrence of the latter, in his communications with Dr. Price, that two new works, viz. the "Choir and the Oratory," by Mr. Conder, and an "Autumn Dream," by Mr. W. Sheppard, were sent for notice. It was found, however, on explanation, that the gentleman recommended by our friend had insuperable objections to the engagement proposed, though he was perfectly willing to relieve Montgomery from any difficulty in respect of the two works just mentioned. It was, we believe, in the end decided that the parties should each take one of the books; the bard appropriating that first above named, giving to his friend Mr. Sheppard's poem. Critiques on both the works duly appeared in the "Eclectic Review."

The task of reviewing such a book as Mr. Conder's was not only in exact accordance with the acknowledged taste and feelings of Montgomery, but it devolved upon him at a time when his judgment might be presumed to have been established by a large experimental acquaintance with the practical difficulties of composition in sacred poetry, added to those laborious and careful investigations into the merits of his distinguished predecessors in this line, which had qualified him, in so particular a manner, to become an instructive commentator on their works. Hence, the review in question assumes a degree of interest beyond that of its mere application to the book named at its head, the beauties and defects of which are pointed out

with a degree of candour that shows no small amount of moral courage in one in whom the friend was almost sure to be recognised as the reviewer.

In this article the writer assumes the truth of a sentiment always avowed in his conversation, as well as laid down in his lectures — that genuine poetry, in its best forms, is the highest, the noblest expression of human intelligence, the really splendid claims and more generally admitted honours of the sciences themselves notwithstanding, as we recollect to have heard the poet remark on one occasion. In speaking of the true poet, who, rising above the taste or comprehension of the millions who live around him, appeals to the intelligent minority in his own or in a future age, the reviewer says, —

“When Milton, appealing from vulgar and temporary disparagement, solaces himself with the hope that he should yet ‘fit audience find, though few,’ it was in the consciousness that *such* he could please by his divine and complicated harmonies, while he disregarded the neglect of the multitude of those who *were not* pleased, because they *could not* be so with strains too exalted for their comprehension. He however, who, like Milton, writes above his age, or looks beyond it for his reward, hazards much; yet the venture is a brave one, and the sacrifice ideal, though hard to make: for, if the man of genius can be content to forego the praise of one generation, he will never repent the stake, since, if he fails, he can never be affected by the posthumous loss, and if he wins, he will enjoy his modicum of renown when it comes — but not to himself — as much as Homer has enjoyed his immortality above ground for three thousand years past, during which he has been below. And this verily is the consummation of that fame, towards the acquisition of which there is such an ineffable instinct in minds of the proudest standing, that no labour, privation, or suffering have been deemed too costly for the purchase of a

chance of the smallest reversion of it ; as though a man were to sell all that he had to buy the reversion of a lease which had 999 years to run, and was held during that term at a peppercorn rent."

On the subject of a metrical rendering of scriptural passages, suggested by the matter of the book under notice, the reviewer justly remarks : —

"It cannot be denied, and it need not be concealed, that all attempts to versify portions of Holy Writ must fail in the main purpose of poetry, which is *so* to adorn or dignify its themes, that by the new light thrown upon them they may be exalted beyond any previous conception of their beauty or their grandeur which obtained in ordinary minds. Now, it so happens, that the *authorised translation* of the scriptures, to ninety-nine out of a hundred of our countrymen, is *the Bible itself*, as though neither Hebrew nor Greek prototypes existed, and the oracles of God had been actually delivered in their own tongue. Hence, the most perfect metrical rendering of the most poetical passages has the same comparative flatness, to the multitude of readers, as the best translations of the classics have to the learned, who are familiar with the originals. This is not a small hindrance to *practical* success, and *abstract* success issues not in utility beyond the circle of the author's own connections, or the few among his contemporaries who may read, approve, and casually recommend a work, the merit of which the world is very willing to admit on their credit, and then care no more about. The great and insurmountable obstacle in the way of scripture paraphrasts and translators, has been thus stated and exemplified — no matter by whom.\*

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\* No wonder that this expression, taken in connection with the reference at the end of the quotation, should have furnished presumptive evidence of the identity of the reviewer with the Sheffield poet, too strong to be set aside by anything short of direct disavowal on the part of the latter, who, however, appeared not unwilling to be suspected.



‘ Scripture language, whether historical, poetic, or doctrinal, is so comprehensive, that in any wise to alter, is to impair it ; if you add, you encumber it ; if you diminish, you maim the sense ; to paraphrase it, is to enfeeble everlasting strength ; to imitate it, is to impoverish inexhaustible riches ; and to translate into verse is necessarily to do one or the other, or both of these, in every line. For example — “ The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul ; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple ; the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart ; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.” Psalm xix. 7, 8. The literal terms here are so perfect a vehicle of pure thought, that any metrical reading must render them less so ; because words equally few and simple cannot be found in the English tongue which would express these plain sentiments in rhymes and numbers. An extreme case has been purposely chosen to make the illustration more palpable. . . . The prime cause of miscarriage in every attempt to paraphrase scripture passages, appears to be, that, in order to bring them within the rules of rhyme and metre, all that the poet introduces of his own becomes alloy, which debases the standard of the original. On the contrary, when he adorns a train of his own private thoughts with scripture images and ideas, or interweaves with his own language scripture phrases that fall without straining into his verse, the latter is illustrated and enriched by the alliance or amalgamation. In a word, divine themes are necessarily degraded by human interpolations ; while human compositions are necessarily exalted by the felicitous introduction of sacred allusions. This is a secret of which few that have meddled with the perilous and delicate subject have been aware.’ *Introduction to the Olney Hymns.*”

As appendant to these instructive quotations relative to the *matter* of sacred versification, we cannot forbear copying another passage concerning *metre*, which shows equal force of accurate discrimination on a subject which is perhaps less generally understood than the former.



"The subject of metres in Psalmody," says the reviewer, "being of prime importance, we lay considerable stress even upon what may be deemed insignificant points in reference to it; metre being the organisation of the bodily vehicle of the thought in poetry. Mr. Conder has rendered the twenty-ninth Psalm in blank verse, thereby bringing his pretty close imitation of the original into rather hazardous comparison with the authorised version, which is marked by uncommon vigour, animation, and celerity of utterance, adapted to the brief, sententious, and peremptory style of the composition. How differently writers and their readers may sometimes feel, and judge according to feeling, on topics wherein each is self-confident, will appear from the contrary opinions entertained by our author and his present critic on a question mooted by himself in his preface, and referring to this Psalm. He says, 'A striking instance of the want of adaptation in the metre to the character of the composition occurs in more than one version of Psalm xxix., rendered in a jiggish anapæstic measure, the effect of which is almost that of travestie.' Not certainly on 'the measure,'" our reviewer continues, "but on the management of it, must this point turn. It is a stale saying that between the sublime and the ridiculous there is but a step; and so there is between the top of a precipice and the bottom; but how many steps are there back again? The showy phrase is a mere truism; for there is but one step between motion and rest, good and evil, life and death; between all antagonisms and antipathies; where their very proximity (being the extreme of each, beyond which neither can go) is the sign of infinite and everlasting separation. Now no kind of metre, of itself, belongs either to the sublime or the ridiculous, but every kind may be and has been used for the one or the other; consequently none is either exclusively elevated or degraded by its heterogeneous application. It is true, that the magnificent measure here disparaged has frequently been made the vehicle of vulgar ribaldry in songs and ballads, as well as in ludicrous exhibitions of men and manners, like the 'New Bath Guide,' and the 'Two-penny Post Bag.' It is true also, that justice has seldom been done

to it by those who have adopted it for serious themes ; indeed, so bunglingly, so blunderingly have its cadences been jumbled and perverted, that, if it be ‘a jiggling measure,’ none but an adept can dance a ‘reel’ through ten bars of it, without stumbling over discords and flats, false accents, false quantities, redundant or defective syllables, in three lines out of five. That the anapæstic measure is capable of sustaining the height of the greatest argument that can be held in song, or touching the finest chords of affection into tones the most delicate and tender, two examples will prove, from ‘Lochiel’s Warning,’ by Thomas Campbell, and the ‘Tabernacles’ of Herbert Knowles. Lochiel, the Highland chieftain, marching with his clan to the fatal battle of Culloden, consults a second-sighted countryman by the way, respecting the result of his enterprise ; yet, when calamities the most fearful are foretold, he treats with contempt both the wizard and his warning. The latter indignantly retorts, and thus pictures in vision the future conflagration of the warrior’s dwelling, the devastation of his lands, and the impoverishment and destitution of his family ; though an extract from a poem so perfect in its kind is injustice to the whole : —

“‘Ha ! laugh’st thou, Lochiel, my vision to scorn ?  
Proud bird of the mountain, thy plume shall be torn :  
Say — rushed the bold eagle exultingly forth,  
From his home in the black-rolling clouds of the north ;  
So ! the death-shot of foemen outspeeding, he rode  
Companionless, bearing destruction abroad ;  
But, down let him stoop from his havoc on high !  
Ah ! home let him speed — for the spoiler is nigh.

“‘Why flames the far summit ? why shoot to the blast  
These embers, like stars to the firmament cast ?  
’Tis the fire-shower of ruin, all dreadfully driven  
From his eyrie, that beacons the darkness of heaven.

“‘O, crested Lochiel ! the peerless in might,  
Whose banners appear on the battlement’s height ;

Heaven's fire is around thee, to blast and to burn ;  
 Return to thy dwelling, all lonely, return ;  
 For the blackness of ashes shall mark where it stood,  
 And a wild mother scream o'er her famishing brood.'

"Are these noble numbers," asks the reviewer, "unworthy of the catastrophe which they thus terribly blazon to the eye, thunder into the ear, and make the heart quail in the contemplation of it? No; the anapæst is no 'jigging measure' here. From 'Verses written in the Churchyard of Richmond' (Yorkshire), by a youth belonging to the adjacent grammar-school, take these stanzas:—

" 'Methinks it is good to be here :  
     If thou wilt, let us build — but to whom ?  
     Nor Elias nor Moses appear,  
 But the shadows of eve that encompass the gloom,  
 The abode of the dead and the place of the tomb.'

"After asking, 'shall we build to ambition?' — 'to beauty?' — 'to pride?' — 'to riches?' — 'to pleasure?' — he proceeds: —

" 'Shall we build to affection and love ?  
     Ah! no ; they have withered and died,  
     Or fled with the spirit above ;  
*Friends, brothers, and sisters, are laid side by side,  
 Yet none have saluted and none have replied !*

" 'Unto sorrow ? the dead cannot grieve ;  
     Not a sob, not a sigh meets mine ear,  
     Which compassion itself could relieve :  
*Ah ! sweetly they slumber, nor hope, love, and fear ;  
 Peace, peace, is the watchword, the only one here.'* \*

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\* Montgomery would repeat the stanzas—those couplets particularly above marked by italics—with ineffable pathos ; adding that he would have given a good deal to have been the writer of them. He admitted that "The Tabernacles," by Herbert Knowles, is a striking example of what a single composition of no great effort

"We doubt whether any combination of iambics or trochaics in our language could express, with equal brevity, beauty, and precision, the sentiments contained in the closing couplets of the two latter stanzas. Is there an 'effect' approaching to 'travestie' here?

"We might quote Lord Byron's famous 'Hebrew Melody' on the destruction of Sennacherib's army; but we have at hand a greater authority in favour of anapæsts than either Campbell, Lord Byron, or Herbert Knowles; and though Mr. Conder may demur to the judgment of his critic here, the latter must insist in *this* place that the precedence be given to himself before the illustrious names above mentioned, or any other, on the question at issue. We refer him to his own version of the twenty-third Psalm\*, and the three stanzas of the same measure shortened, occurring in the seventy-ninth Psalm.

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and still less pretence may do towards the conferring of what is called *poetical immortality* on a writer. These verses can never be forgotten—there are others by the same author, but they are even now scarcely remembered.

\* In order to enable the reader at once to judge of the correctness of the sentiment in the text, and at the same time to afford a pleasing specimen of the sacred poetry of Mr. Conder, we give the version of Psalm xxiii. referred to:—

"With God for my Shepherd, I never can need;  
 He finds the fresh pastures where daily I feed;  
 By soft-flowing waters he chooses my track,  
 And leads, if I stray, his poor wanderer back;  
 He guides me aright in the path I should take,  
 The pathway of life, for his faithfulness' sake;  
 Yea, though the dark ravines of death I should tread,  
 If thou, Lord, art with me, no peril I'll dread:  
 I'll think on thy rod, thy staff of defence,  
 And these shall new courage and comfort dispense:  
 Thou spreadest my board in the sight of my foes;  
 My head thou anointest; my cup overflows;  
 Still goodness shall follow, where'er I may roam,  
 And the house of the Lord be for ever my home."

*Choir and Oratory*, p. 170.

“If ever poetry is to be composed in our language, approaching to or rivalling in majesty and spirit the classical metres, it must be by substituting anapæsts and dactyls for iambuses and trochees in our verse, notwithstanding some miscarriages of great poets in attempts of this kind. Lines, on this principle, may be reduced to *three*, and extended to *seventeen* syllables, with every intermediate proportion, more flexible, free, and comprehensive than anything that has yet been compiled in heavier cadences. The principal baulk to improvement in this direction is the ambiguity of many of our accents, and the almost utter deficiency of spondees in our pronunciation. But to show how doubtful such judgments about jiggling measures may be, what thinks our author of the following flippancy of Shenstone, who has himself reduced the minor form of anapæsts to proverbial namby-pamby, in his famous pastoral? —

“ ‘My banks, *they* are *furnished* with bees,  
Whose murmurs invite one to sleep.’

“That prince of Arcadians asks, ‘Does not the first line in Virgil patter like a hailstorm?’

“ ‘Tityre, tu, patulæ recubans sub tegmine fagi.’

“And what if it does? Is the Latin hexameter to be debased on that account, when this pretty collocation of syllables is followed by four lines of superlative and strikingly contrasted harmony, from the pathos of —

“ ‘Nos patriæ fines et dulcia linquimus arva,  
Nos patriam fugimus,’ &c.,

to the bugle-toned cadence of —

“ ‘Formosam resonare doces Amaryllida silvas.’ ”

Metrical canons like these, promulgated and illustrated, *ex cathedrâ*, by a master in the science of sacred song, will be received with respect by his brethren of the consecrated lyre. Montgomery had not himself



written much in the anapæstic measure latterly, — indeed nothing in that precise form of it to which the foregoing defence more particularly refers, — with the exception of certain portions of the “Songs of Zion.” And it does so happen, that Psalm xxix., to anapæstic versions of which Mr. Conder has especially objected, is rendered in this measure. Previous to quoting a couple of verses from Montgomery’s imitation of this Psalm, it may be interesting to add, that whatever may be the reader’s opinion upon what *has been done*, the reviewer adduces as one reason why such a metre *might be* successfully adopted, — the familiarity of English ears with the words of the common Bible translation, abounding, as it does, in phrases and strains of peculiar beauty and consonance, which scarcely can, without violating the “*jus et norma loquendi*,” be pressed into the service of the slower-motivated iambus, or the sweet and flowing trochee. “The voice of the Lord” occurs seven times in this brief Psalm — for which Mr. Conder has used “Jehovah’s voice,” a version unobjectionable enough as to the sense, but which Montgomery thought could not, during the present generation at least, be satisfactorily substituted for the favourite and vernacular expression. “Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness :” this consists of four pure anapæsts, not one of which, without violence, could be crowded into Miltonic numbers. “Give unto the Lord the glory due to his name :” this, though not strictly metrical, equally defies combination with the lesser feet of verse. The curious in such matters will derive gratification from comparing the metrical versions of Montgomery, Mr. Conder, and others, with this well-known Psalm as it stands in our English Bibles : the following stanzas will show how far the experiment of the Sheffield bard justifies his criticism : —



“The voice of the Lord on the ocean is known,  
The God of eternity thundereth abroad ;  
The voice of the Lord, from the depth of his throne,  
Is terror and power ; — all nature is awed.

“At the voice of the Lord the cedars are bowed,  
And towers from their base into ruin are hurled ;  
The voice of the Lord, from the dark-bosomed cloud,  
Dissevers the lightning in flames o’er the world.”

It will hardly be denied that these verses exhibit at once a happy example of successful rendering of a portion of the Psalm in question, and a noble specimen of the metre repudiated by Mr. Conder. Indeed, the exquisite ear for discriminating prosodial subtleties possessed by Montgomery, led him to perceive that the whole pace of the prose rendering of the twenty-ninth Psalm, in the English Bible, is anapæstic ; and even to express his opinion that more than half of it, with nearly as few wrong accents and lame quantities as are usually mixed up with this staple, both by profane and sacred rhymers, might be divided into lengths, and read as blank verse in this “jigging measure,” which even Mr. Conder himself would scarcely denounce as travestie.

## CHAP. LXXVII.

1837.

MONTGOMERY'S PRESENT POLITICAL OPINIONS. — FEELINGS RELATIVE TO PARLIAMENTARY HONOURS AND DUTIES. — PORTRAITS OF THE POET AND THE REV. ROBERT NEWTON. — LAW OF PRIMOGENITURE. — CONVERSATION. — DECLINES TO ALLOW HIMSELF TO BE NOMINATED A CANDIDATE TO REPRESENT THE BOROUGH OF SHEFFIELD. — LECTURES ON THE BRITISH POETS AT THE ROYAL INSTITUTION. — LETTER TO JOHN HOLLAND. — POETRY AND UTILITARIANISM. — LETTER TO GEORGE BENNET. — ELEGIAC VERSES. — THE "FIRST PASSING BELL."

ONE morning Mr. Montgomery called upon Mr. Holland, and, after intimating that he was about to tell him something which was, for a time, to be a secret, added, "Don't be alarmed; I am not going to tell you I am about to be married." *Holland*: "I did not expect that; but rather, that you may have received a requisition to come forward as a candidate for the representation of the borough of Sheffield, in the place of Mr. Buckingham, who, as you perceive, is about to retire." *Montgomery*: "No, I have not received any such invitation; and I should be very sorry to go to parliament fettered with pledges to vote this way or that way, on all conceivable questions, and generally before a word of evidence has been heard on the subjects thus prejudged. I think, except in perhaps a few rare instances, a candidate ought not to be expected to do more than state generally his political

views at the hustings, leaving himself at liberty to decide upon important matters as they come before him in parliament, according to the best of his judgment, after hearing the evidence on all sides. At all events, I would give no such pledges as are now-a-days commonly exacted from candidates." Although these remarks were merely of a passing and almost jocular nature, it cannot be denied that the question, why no attempt was ever made to send Montgomery to parliament as member for Sheffield, may very naturally suggest itself. It so happened, that both during the period immediately preceding the passing of the Reform Bill,—when of course, the inhabitants of that town, in common with others indulging similar expectations, were busily engaged in discussing the qualifications of persons likely to be elected to represent the new borough,—and afterwards, when, in the present year, a vacancy in the representation was expected by the resignation of Mr. Buckingham, one of the biographers was in a position which allowed him to become acquainted with the secret springs of the local political movement. On both occasions the name of Montgomery was mentioned. In 1832 it was the conviction of his best friends that, to involve him, willing or unwilling, in an electioneering conflict with men prepared to go to so much greater lengths in promises and pledges than he could do, and that before a large constituency suddenly intoxicated with vague and unreasonable expectations, would be an act of unjustifiable wantonness towards the feelings of one who, of all his townsmen, was perhaps the least calculated for such a strife at such a time. Although this was a strong and sufficient reason with Montgomery's more intimate friends for maintaining silence concerning him at that juncture, the main ground of his being so

quietly passed over by others was, doubtless, his supposed want of sympathy with either political party in the maintenance of those ultra opinions which had too generally characterised alike the more desperate advocates and the not less unreasonable opponents of the Reform Bill.

At the second of the periods above referred to,—namely, in 1837,—there can be no doubt but that the opinions of Montgomery had become, in the main, very similar to those indicated by the term *Conservative*, using that term in its legitimate sense. With still more confidence may it be asserted that he very fairly represented, in his views and feelings, an increasing majority of the sober, respectable, intelligent, and pious portion of the community. But it happened in Sheffield, as elsewhere, that while, on the one hand, many old and otherwise judicious Whigs were induced to support candidates avowing ultra-liberal doctrines, in order to secure the co-operation of the Radicals at elections,—the so-called Conservatives, on the other hand, were not generally in a condition, and many of them not at all disposed, to outrage the hereditary opinions of a fast-diminishing remnant of the old Tory school of politicians. Impossible, however, as it must have been for Montgomery to have satisfied either of these parties, we have little doubt but, had he been younger in years and stronger in health, and disposed to abide a contest, he might have become, by a majority of both the classes adverted to, the representative for the borough in which for so many years he exercised such a beneficent influence. That such a position would have conduced to his happiness we do not believe; even if it had increased his usefulness or his reputation, the probability of which may well be doubted. Neither the genius, the education, nor the tastes of the Christian

poet were decidedly in conformity with those of the popular modern senator.

At the Wesleyan Missionary Meeting at Sheffield, in 1836, already mentioned, Montgomery, as usual, occupied the chair. Mr. Cocker, of Barnsley, who was present on that occasion, conceived the idea of a picture, in which portraits of the poet and of the Rev. Robert Newton should be given, the latter in the attitude of addressing the former as president. Montgomery, on being asked to sit, should the scheme be matured, did not give a peremptory negative, but rather sportively passed off a proposal which he hoped and believed would evaporate after a little reflection. The reverse of that, however, turned out to be the case; and at the beginning of the present year, Mr. Cocker once more earnestly solicited Montgomery to concur in the realisation of the project. He still tried to evade the intended compliment, alleging, in reply to his friends' repeated solicitations, that "Mr. Newton will stand *best alone*; though no doubt a foil, in one view, might be of advantage to set him off before ordinary eyes. If, therefore, the painter either now or hereafter comes to Sheffield, I will give him three or four hours a day, if he chooses to make what he can of my face." But his enthusiastic Barnsley admirer was not to be thus put off; and in the month of March, Mr. Pickering, the artist, came to Sheffield, and hired a room near The Mount, Montgomery giving him there several sittings for the portrait, which was afterwards very successfully copied, of life-size, into a large picture. Coincidentally with the completion of the painter's task, a wedding took place in the family of Mr. Cocker, who wrote to Montgomery, inviting him to come to Barnsley, and see the picture on that occasion; adding—what was not likely to forward his object—

some remarks on the poet's bachelorship. The latter, in his reply, after declining the invitation and expressing some good wishes for the youthful pair, says:—

“ In reference to your hint of what I owe to society for neglecting myself to patronise the institution of matrimony, alas! I am persuaded that you know, by personal experience, that the loss and the misfortune are my own. Whether the fault be so, I must leave others to judge in charity where there is no evidence. The secret is within myself, and it is on the way to the grave, from which no secret will be betrayed till the Day of Judgment. I should be glad indeed were it in my power to see Mr. Pickering's finished picture, in which I am so much honoured by the exercise of his talent, and the company in which he has placed me;—but that cannot be at present.”

March. Mr. Holland lent Mr. Montgomery a pamphlet entitled the “ Right of Primogeniture examined,” written by Mr. Bailey, of Sheffield. On returning it, the poet said the question was very shrewdly argued; and for his part, he found it difficult to dissent from the conclusions of the author. On Mr. Holland remarking that the fact of Mr. Bailey, Mr. Montgomery, and himself being alike bachelors, and none of the three being either inheritors of property in right of primogeniture, or likely to leave estates to eldest sons, might prejudice their opinions on the side of a *quasi* liberality, Montgomery replied: “ No; it rather places us in a better position for judging impartially.” The law of entail, however, to which Mr. Bailey referred, he should not, he said, be disposed to meddle with, much less with the right of a man to leave his property to whom he thought fit; but he had always conceived and still thought there was commonly extreme hardship and unfairness in the working of a law which not only allowed the eldest son to inherit the whole of the real



estate of a father dying intestate, and thus leave out of consideration all the other children who stood in the same blood relation to the last owner as himself; but the matter was often much worse. He had himself known cases in which, no will being found, nearly the whole of the personal property, which at all events should have been divided among the children, was absorbed in liquidating debts contracted in improving the freehold. In such cases he, of course, agreed with Mr. Bailey in opinion, that unless the eldest son, on coming of age, should act with a justice beyond the law, his brother might be left in a state of destitution.

March 31. *Montgomery*: "I am distressed with the idea of going to London at this season of the year; and more especially with the prospect of remaining there six weeks." *Holland*: "The journey is now-a-days accounted but a trifle with many persons who go from Sheffield on business." *Montgomery*: "But with me, you know, such an *out* is a sort of era." *Holland*: "But, suppose you were to go to parliament, your residence in the metropolis would be imperative, and might possibly be protracted to a longer period; and I think you would be sent, if your opinions were believed by others to be as conservative as I know them to be." *Montgomery*: "Mr. Holland," said he, with peculiar emphasis, "I am as much a lover of liberty as ever I was; but when I see the mischief which men are doing in the name and under the cloak of liberty, I am almost compelled to be a conservative in self-defence. I should be sorry to go to parliament, as many do, tied hand and foot by a party: if I were sent, I would go at least unfettered by pledges, and not, as a mere political agent, be expected every week to receive instructions by letter how I was to speak and vote. I regard the House of Commons as a deliberative assembly; and if

I were sent thither, I should expect to be left to act according to the best of my judgment on the merits of each question in the discussion or decision of which I might be concerned." *Holland*: "But, however you might object to giving pledges in general, you would, doubtless, think it right that any party about to support you should be fairly put in possession of your political creed, as to its definite outline at least." *Montgomery*: "Undoubtedly I should. If I were to be applied to, and felt inclined to entertain the application, I would most honestly and explicitly state, at length, what were my views. I would then say,—Gentlemen, such are my decided opinions; it is for you to judge how far you deem them conformable to your sentiments." *Holland*: "Do you think you could support a government at the head of which Sir Robert Peel might be placed; for I think there is no very great difference between your politics and his, as you would explain them to each other confidentially." *Montgomery*: "Sir Robert Peel is believed to be still a thorough Tory; but he is too shrewd an observer not to read aright the signs of the times, and too wise a man not to wish to turn them to the best account in a good sense; and I must say, with reference to the present aspect of affairs, that I believe there are few points, if any, on which Sir Robert and myself should not be, in the main, agreed." A few mornings afterwards the following conversation ensued: *Holland*: "From what passed between us the other evening, relative to current local politics, and in consequence of opinions entertained by others, I am desired to ask you,—I do not say officially, but confidentially, and in a way and for an end the import of which you will perfectly understand,—whether you *could* and *would* be willing to be sent to parliament by the Conservative party in the borough

of Sheffield, if a respectable requisition should be presented to you having that object?" *Montgomery*: "Mr. Holland, as you put a very direct question, I must now say to *you* that my mind has long been made up on this subject: it is a fact that such a thing has been mentioned to me more than once, though only in a general way. Mr. ——— indeed, who, as you know, possessed considerable influence, told me that if I would consent to be put in nomination he would support me instead of Mr. ———." *Holland*: "But in that case you must have been brought forward, or at all events supported, by the Radical interest, and to that, I am sure, you could not have consented." *Montgomery*: "No: anything but Radicalism." *Holland*: "Many of the noisy political theorists of our day appear to act and talk as if the natural tendency of human nature, instead of being towards evil, had really a strong bias towards perfection, were it not that the meddlesomeness of government had interposed the barriers of kingcraft and priestcraft." *Montgomery*: "Of which *perfection*, those parties themselves commonly present the smallest possible amount." *Holland*: "Then I am to understand that you decidedly decline going to parliament?" *Montgomery*: "Decidedly: the duties and vexations of such a station, even if attained, would be such as I have now no spirit and as little taste for encountering. Besides, I do not feel it to be a matter of duty; and therefore my conscience entirely acquits me of blame. Had the opportunity of taking such a step appeared to me a moral obligation, I trust I should not have hesitated to take it, whatever sacrifice it might have required. I do not think *you* will say, that even in your opinion I ought to decide otherwise than as I have done." *Holland*: "I think you have determined most wisely: indeed, from a knowledge and consi-

deration of your age, temperament, and habits of life, I should have regarded even the affair of an election, under any circumstances, as one of the most painful experiments which could have been made upon your peace of mind; but my duty to you and to other parties left me no alternative between frankly putting the question to you, as I have done, or neutralising it myself by a course which I should not have felt justified in adopting."

On the 7th of April Montgomery left Sheffield for London, in pursuance of an engagement to deliver six lectures on so many successive Tuesdays at the Royal Institution, in Albemarle Street, "On the Principal British Poets." The lectures were very respectably attended, and gave entire satisfaction to all the parties concerned.\* The proprietor of the "Metropolitan Magazine" was anxious to have purchased the MS. of the lectures for publication in that periodical, distributing the matter over the ensuing twelvemonths' numbers. The remuneration proposed was so liberal, that the author would at once have closed with the offer, had he not experienced some misgivings,

\* The Six Lectures comprise the following subjects:—*Lecture 1.* Introduction.—A View of the Present State of Poetry and General Literature in this Country. *Lecture 2.* Strictures on the earlier British Poets from the Reign of Edward III., including Langlande, Chaucer, Gower, &c. *Lecture 3.* British Poets of the Fifteenth Sixteenth, and Seventeenth Centuries, including Skelton, Surrey, Spenser, Shakspeare, Donne, &c. *Lecture 4.* British Poets of the Seventeenth Century continued, including Cowley, Butler, Milton, Dryden, Prior, Addison, &c. *Lecture 5.* British Poets of the Eighteenth Century, including Parnell, Pope, Thomson, Young, Churchill, Akenside, &c. *Lecture 6.* British Poetesses.—British Poets of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries, including Burns, Cowper, Crabbe, Sir Walter Scott, Lord Byron, and Coleridge, with brief references to some principal living Poets,—Wordsworth, Southey, Rogers, Campbell, Moore, &c.

in the first place, as to whether they were really worth the sum offered; and, in the next place, whether he ought, considering what was due to his own reputation, to give them to the public, even through such a medium, without first subjecting them to a more leisurely and rigid revision than the occasion afforded him a chance of bestowing. A part of the first lecture he did, indeed, consent thus to dispose of. We believe he received fifty guineas for the delivery of the lectures before the Royal Institution. His spare time during this visit to the metropolis was, for the most part, divided between the claims of his relatives at Woolwich, and those of his old friend George Bennet, Esq., at Hackney. It was chiefly in consequence of the latter association that he was induced to take a part as a speaker at the annual meeting of the London Missionary Society, the only benevolent Institution (with a single exception, perhaps) whose anniversary his over-cautious timidity did not prevent him from attending. The following letter, addressed to one of the biographers, will not here be deemed out of place:—

*James Montgomery to John Holland.*

“ Woolwich, May 1. 1837.

“ MY DEAR FRIEND,

“ I must write to-day lest to-morrow should never come,—as, indeed, it never has come since the world began,—and you should have to wait till the ‘crack of doom’ before I acknowledged the unexpected obligation which, by the way, omits even to notice the only circumstance on which I might have calculated to receive an epistolary favour from you during my temporary absence. Send your thoughts as far as Exeter, and they will bring you back intelligence of the subject to which I allude because *you* have *not*. No news, therefore, I take to be good news;



and I sincerely thank you for the silent communication of the same. Accept equal thanks for what your letter did say, as for what it did not.

“The loose writing of this page\* will show you that I do not mean to lay you under any great burthen of gratitude to me for what this sheet may bring. The truth is, that here I can misspend time quite as much as at home, both in person and by proxy; for you know I have many to help me in the idle work. Coming hither, also, not by wilful procrastination of what it would have been very convenient to have prepared before I set out, — namely, the remodification of my lectures, — I have been obliged to seize every fragment of leisure to fit them for delivery before a metropolitan audience within the limited hour, every moment of which must be occupied with thoughts to condense as much matter as possible within the fewest words. Besides this, I acknowledge that from causes which I could not altogether make intelligible, if I would, to people of happier temperament (as I would hope every breathing man, woman, and child throughout the world *is*), I have been greatly depressed in spirit, and alive only in nerves—tremblingly alive! I have therefore written but one letter homeward since my arrival,— of the cream of which, it seems, the kind friend to whom it was addressed has permitted you to partake. In return, you may communicate the quintessence of this to her, if, after having been five times distilled, there be a drop of precious extract produced which will not exhale the moment the seal is broken, and the eye of the receiver has run over it. Two pages being thus ravaged, I can afford to slacken the pace of my pen, and try to say something about my proceedings here. Between Hackney and Woolwich alternately, my days and nights have been spent, with frequent visits, but only for a few hours each, in town. Sarah [Gales] would tell you that my first lecture was well attended, — so well, indeed, that my ‘prophetic soul’ anticipated a falling off at the second, and was a true prophet, as it generally

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\* And, as usual, followed by dense scription of almost microscopic minuteness towards the end of the letter.



is when it croaks like a raven of ill omen from the left hand. I was sadly dispirited even before it came on, and could not recover my confidence, though, in fact, the audience was as large as the largest (I think) that I had on my former courses. Last Tuesday I delivered the third, and though the company was less numerous than the first, it considerably exceeded the second; and the reading went off very well: of course I cast my slough (the 'slough of despond,' if you will allow the quibble) like a serpent in spring. The last word reminds me that spring is just peeping out of the ground here, and looking timidly about her to see whether she may really get up at last, after having so long overlaid herself, indeed after having been almost *overlaid* by winter, her natural (read *unnatural*) mother. I have not heard the cuckoo, nor seen a swallow yet; but I have *seen* a young lady who heard the former a fortnight ago, and who has reasonable hopes of seeing the latter within a fortnight hence, — the last five days having advanced the season more than the sun had done in all his journey through the first sign of the year; renewing its youth as it was wont to do in former ages, but as of late it has rarely done till much later. With me, the only intimation of youth *to be* renewed is the decay of nature. I have, indeed, no *cause* to complain, except a *disposition* to complain, — the worst of all possible causes, where murmuring is ingratitude, and less than the most fervent gratitude is impiety. My daily prayer is to have — next to 'a broken heart and a contrite spirit' — a thoughtful heart, and a meek and quiet spirit, resigned wholly to *his* will, who alone knows what is good for me, and who alone can do any good to me.

"I have been called upon to attend two private meetings for our Moravian missions, and a public one \* for another beautiful charity—for the relief of widows in the first month of their affliction and bereavement — during the past week.

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\* At the invitation of Mr. Fincher, secretary of the Royal Institution, for whose little volume, entitled "Achievements of Prayer," Montgomery wrote a brief preface.

Several others have *been* in my way, but I have *made* it in my way to pass by on the other side. Indeed, I must avoid as many occasions of this kind as possible — both flesh and spirit fail me, and I never dare engage in such services now, except when I dare not desert, though a pressed man. To-day is the great Wesleyan Annual [Missionary] Meeting at Exeter Hall; and I have wilfully kept out of sight of my friends in that Connexion, that they might not, out of courtesy, ask me to take part at the meetings to come.

“ I have heard three of Professor Faraday’s Lectures : of him, and of them, I can only say that I never felt equal pleasure, nor *might* have derived more profit from scientific discourses, than on those occasions. His delivery is as clear, as fluent, and as unremitting as the rippling of a stream,— never defective, never overflowing ; but seen in its beauty, heard in its music, and felt in its coolness, amidst the fields which it fertilises, and under the sunshine and foliage which alternately play at hide-and-seek, as it were, upon its surface. I have been obliged to give my opinion in ‘ prose run mad ’ on this difficult subject, because sober prose would occupy ten times as much space to express, in common-sense language, the character of his manner and his matter. His thoughts seem to speak their own words and not his : that is, they seem to be uttered in the very terms in which they occur to himself in the process of thinking them ;—for don’t we think our thoughts in words ? . . .

“ I am, very truly, your obliged friend,

“ J. MONTGOMERY.

“ P.S. This paper is in mourning for no less a personage than the mighty N. M. Rothschild : it has his arms in the water-mark : I came honestly by it. The motto under the arms is a noble one.\*

“ Mr. John Holland, Music Hall, Sheffield.”

One of the most striking passages in the printed lecture,—occurring too, as it does, amidst some brilliant

\* “ CONCORDIA, INTEGRITAS, INDUSTRIA.”

illustrations, drawn from the triumphs of modern science, especially the invention of the safety lamp, and the economy of gas lighting, — is that in which the author attributes to the character of *woman* his confidence in the everlasting supremacy of poetry as a vehicle of sentiment and emotion. After describing the period in which he was speaking as belonging to an age of “economists and calculators,” and supposing that there might exist individuals of those classes “so cold-blooded that they would save the crumbs which their little children scatter for the robin-redbreasts in winter, — beings of such algebraic temperament that they would silence the cuckoo, forbid the return of the swallow and the nightingale to our coasts, and bereave the spring of its flowers and streams, its fragrance, its wild music, and all its luxuriance of vegetation; or who could look without a sigh upon woods condemned to the axe, as they lay for the last time, in the pomp of autumnal colouring, as gorgeous in their array as evening clouds upon the slopes of the hills;” the poetical lecturer proceeds: —

“There may be such loveless, joyless, heartless personages as these, who value everything at its market price, and would be content, while they could buy and sell, and get gain, if there were neither blossoms, nor birds, nor trees on earth, — nor clouds, for ever changing shapes and hues, nor stars eternally the same in heaven. But it can never be that ‘man that is born of a woman’ should cease to imbibe with his mother’s milk, and from his nurse’s songs, an intense and inextinguishable delight in that art which youth and woman love, because it is the art of Nature, herself a mother, to reflect, as in a mirror, all her beauty and all her graces. It never can be that man, who himself ‘cometh forth as a flower,’ should not have his season of bloom and fragrance, as well as of fruit-bearing and decay. That season is his youth; and youth, from its own genial instinct, under the influence of woman, will ever love that which she loves —

that which she taught him to love while she nourished him at her breasts, or lulled him to slumber on her lap with the sweetest tones that ever fall from human lips, and find their way through newly-opened ears to infant hearts, prepared with their first pulsation to respond to the yearnings of maternal tenderness, or the rapturous delight in her offspring, by whatever way communicated — by voice, or look, or touch. Youth thus trained up cannot choose but love poetry, because it ministers to the affections, exalts the imagination, and purifies the heart by generous and benevolent emotions; while it quickens, cherishes, and confirms whatever is holy, and virtuous, and noble in human nature; making life more precious, by giving him enjoyments more exquisite and elevating than the pleasures of sense, the vanities of fashion, and the riches and honours of the world, before he is seduced and corrupted by any or all of these, as too often he is in the sequel. Then neither change of times, of taste, of manners, of pursuits, of civil government, or political relationships, in war or in peace, can so pervert nature itself in bosoms unsophisticated, that the sweet muses shall not only in all ages, ‘fit audience find, though few,’ but shall have a perennial succession of true followers among the most influential classes of our species, — among those whom all others delight to please, — the young of *both* sexes, and the most refined and ingenious of the *better* sex. These, as youth is every moment renewing, and beauty unfadingly preserved, from the perpetually upspringing fountain of *life* — these will be listeners for ever to those strains that might create a soul under the ribs of *death*.” . . .

“Yes, yes, after the utmost that economists and calculators have done to obliterate all the *inequalities* and *originalities* of the human character, and coin minds, like money, into pieces of equal size and nominal value, and stamp them with the same image and superscription, — there is yet such a power as poetry in this cent. per cent. age and working-day world — a power which rules extensively, and will rule while woman and youth exist: nor, till our utilitarians have achieved the utopian perfectibility of

human nature, discovered the elixir of immortality, and confined the secret of both to the male population then living, so that a generation of middle-aged men, never growing older, shall monopolise the earth, and none be born and die in it, — in a word, till they have *abolished youth and woman*, poetry will maintain its supremacy in its place and in its season. *Youth* will delight in it because it is the language of hope, and realises all hope's visions. *Woman* will always love it because it is the language of *love*, and perpetuates her youth by often reminding her of the time when she was wooed, and, 'not unsought,' was won." \*

On Wednesday, the 24th of May, our friend found himself once more comfortably seated with his old companions, the Misses Gales, in the pleasant little parlour at The Mount, overlooking the town of Sheffield, "black, but comely." A day or two afterwards Mr. Holland walked up and took tea with the party; on which occasion Montgomery was remarkably cheerful, although he looked a good deal jaded. The conversation turned principally upon the recent speech of Mr. Serjeant Talfourd, in the House of Commons, on moving for leave to bring in a bill for the extension and better protection of the copyright of authors in their works; and with the general bearing of which our friend coincided.

*James Montgomery to George Bennet.*

"Sheffield, May 30, 1837.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"... I arrived here safely, and better than I could have hoped when I set out on Wednesday afternoon. When we parted on the foregoing evening, you gave me a look of

\* Metropolitan Magazine, June, 1837, pp. 118, 119. This passage, misunderstood by a lady who heard it read in the lecture when delivered at Leeds, drew from her a grave letter of protest against the assumption that women loved poetry only *when* and *because* it was the language of love!



*arch* compassion, such as one cannot help feeling, however sincerely we may sympathise with him, when one sees a friend just enjoying—suffering I mean—one of the ‘miseries of human life.’ These are vexatious enough at the time, but we know they will do him no great harm in the end, and may do him good if he be wise enough to profit by them,—for we may profit by everything except *sin*; and there is no misery which may not be endured with patience, if we will only *let* patience have her perfect work—except *remorse*; *that*, that is even here ‘the worm that dieth not.’ My dilemma was this: you saw me lodged for the next twenty hours in a narrow coach, in which were a poor woman with a very young child, and a lad about ten or twelve years old, all three of *unprepossessing* appearance. I was hurt to the quick—and poor, proud, selfish human nature revolted within me when I knew my doom. I could not help—at least I *did not* help—expressing, not loud but peevishly, my fear that the child would be an awkward inmate. The mother answered very gently, that she hoped not; and her husband, a plain, decent mechanic, just coming to the coach, asked me civilly, but frankly, whether I was going as far as Sheffield? I answered *yes*, and asked how far his little family was going? ‘To Sheffield,’ was the unwelcome reply. He then took such an affectionate leave of them, that my conscience smote me, and I resolved that whatever annoyance I might suffer from my travelling companions, they should suffer none from me; accordingly, all the way I behaved as well to them as I could; and am sure that they were sufficiently pleased with me. And here comes the best—not for one moment did I feel the slightest disgust: on the contrary, I never passed a journey more quietly in my life. On this circumstance I have dwelt, because I have frequently been exposed to nuisances which flesh and blood find hard to bear, from women with young children, and which must be borne if one would not forget being a man who once *was* a child and *had* a mother. . . .

“Your affectionate friend,

“J. MONTGOMERY.

“George Bennet, Esq., Grove Place, Hackney.”



About a fortnight after the death of Mr. Hodgson, Montgomery presented to Mr. Holland a copy of verses in memory of that gentleman, with permission to give them to the public: they were accordingly printed in the "Sheffield Mercury" newspaper, and very justly admired for their delicacy and fidelity in reference to the character of the deceased. This tender memorial of a long cherished Christian friendship, consisted, in the first instance, of two parts only; but on two of the writer's friends having remarked that *something* appeared wanting to complete the subject, he furnished to Mr. Holland the stanzas forming the third part, after which, fifty copies, neatly printed and made up, were distributed by the poet among his friends. Montgomery followed the corpse of Mr. Hodgson to its last resting-place in the burial ground of Ecclesall church, near Sheffield: as he says,—

"I saw thee slumbering in thy shroud,  
 As yonder moon I view  
 Now glimmering through a snow-white cloud,  
 'Midst heaven's all-bounding blue;  
 I saw thee lowered into the tomb,  
 Like that cloud darkening into gloom."\*

Some severe remarks having been made by the "Quarterly" † and other "Reviews," upon Cottle's "Recollections of Coleridge," Montgomery was anxious to see the book. Having read it, he agreed with Mr. Holland that the reminiscents had not printed a single remark that was either dishonourable to himself, or derogatory to the friendship which had existed between him and the highly-gifted individual the special character of whose failings the world had not to learn from these volumes.

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\* Works, p. 366.

† Quarterly Review, vol. lix. p. 25.

Montgomery evidently read Cottle's narrative with the greater zest, inasmuch as he thought that many of the peculiarities of Coleridge's character in early life not a little resembled certain elements in his own : we scarcely ever recollect to have known him laugh so heartily as he did at the droll description of the manner in which Cottle, Coleridge, and Wordsworth were each and altogether puzzled to get off a horse's collar ! \*

*James Montgomery to George Bennet.*

“ Sheffield, July 13. 1837.

“ MY DEAR FRIEND,

“ Your favour inclosed in Mr. Ellis's parcel did not reach me till long after its date ; but it was doubly welcome on that very account, because it relieved me from an anxious misgiving that I had done or said something — though I could not imagine when, how, or where — which had given you uneasiness, either when I was enjoying your hospitality at Hackney, or in the letter which I addressed to you soon after my return home on my adventures between Ludgate Hill — in the heart of ‘ the great metropolis,’ — and ‘ The Mount,’ the crowning eminence of your native town. . . . I was also myself held in suspense in regard to an engagement for which I was pledged to make a missionary visit into Staffordshire, on behalf of my Moravian brethren, in the course of this month. I leave home on Saturday next, and as the campaign will probably be concluded by the middle of next week, I hope to be at home at the latter end — unless I run over to Ockbrook for three or four days — business at home requiring my attention immediately afterwards. I should be glad to escape from my duty at the ensuing election, voting for two good men and true to represent all of that description and of every other who dwell in the region of Hallamshire ; but I dare not, for inexpressible reasons, be a recreant, perilous as it is for such an one as I am to act according to my judgment and my conscience in public

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\* Cottle's Recollections, vol. i. p. 323.

affairs in these revolutionary times. However, I am thankful, deeply thankful, that I am under no obligation to take an active personal part in the strife of tongues and pens, of principles and professions, involving the hostility of evil passions, human infirmities, and inveterate prejudices, as well as the noble contraries of all these, arrayed on either side — or rather on all sides — for really I don't know how many angles and faces the question at issue has; pentagonal at least it is, if not an octagon or more, though the aspect of the parties be but triform, and the candidates the same—a Whig, a Radical, and a Conservative. But let this drop, for even you and I will probably not go abreast on this ground. The peace of the country, however, must be broken by the dissolution of one parliament and the election of another. There probably never was a reign at the commencement of which so little could be foreseen of the course of public affairs; for of the 'beauteous majesty' of England what do we know except that she was eighteen years of age the day after you and I parted in the *Belle Sauvage* yard, and that, within a month, she was the most august human being on the face of the earth! for such indeed must the sovereign of the British Isles and their dependencies be. What would Julius Cæsar himself have thought had the vision of this 'Faërie Queene' been opened to him through the vista of eighteen centuries? Verily he would have been content to have been slain, on the very spot where Kensington Palace now stands, by her barbarian ancestors, to be born again in this age of the world, turned upside down from the position in which it stood when he landed in Britain, 'divided from the world,' that he might be the 'Prince Arthur' of this new 'Gloriana,' under the name (*Victoria*), which led him to the slaughter, capture, and fugitation of three millions of his fellow creatures, the least of whom in eternity will be as great, as immortal as himself to suffer or to enjoy! This is reverie; and yet what awful and affecting truths and facts in reference to both this world and that which is to come are involved in it! Well, I have rubbed my eyes, and am awake again, and come down to our common and petty concerns — petty and common as they

be — yet more interesting to you and me just now than ‘Cæsar and his fortunes’ or Victoria and her destinies ; may the latter be as *peaceful* as the former were *belligerent* ! In this prayer we shall both agree, without a thought of ‘the lawfulness of war under any circumstances,’ the point on which *we* are at war. Mr. Samuel Roberts and his bride, I believe, are in your neighbourhood — that is, in London ; but *neighbourhood* there is like neighbourhood in *all* Yorkshire, for among a million and a half of living souls, *folks* may be as far from one another within the compass of twenty square miles as when they are scattered over five thousand. I wish them all joy of their union, and that includes *his* favour in which all joy is included, and without which there is none that deserves the name.

“I am, truly, your friend,

“J. MONTGOMERY.

“George Bennet, Esq., Hackney.”

The following stanzas were addressed to the Rev. Joseph Brown, of Mill Hill, Middlesex, minister of the church built by the late Mr. Wilberforce. On Thursday morning, Jan. 5. 1837, the bell tolled for a death, the first time since the opening of the church in 1834. It was on the decease of a lady, a friend of the venerable founder, and one who had been blessed under the preacher’s ministry.

“*The First Passing Bell.*”

“Here, since the stars of morning sung  
Creation’s glorious birth ;  
Though knell before were never rung  
O’er earth returned to earth ;  
Yet now, while life shall breathe around,  
And death reign sovereign under ground,  
From age to age, yon bell may knoll  
The curfew of some parting soul.

- " Ashes to ashes, dust to dust,  
    Soon shall the first-made tomb  
Receive a mortal charge in trust  
    For an immortal doom ;  
Henceforth, while generations pass,  
Frail as the flowering, withering grass,  
Shall saints' and sinners' bodies here  
Sleep side by side, till Christ appear.
- " Neighbours in life, from door to door,  
    Equal in death they lay,  
Like sheaves upon the threshing-floor,  
    Till the great winnowing day ;  
When He, whose fan is in his hand,  
Shall o'er the mingled harvest stand ;  
The bad, like chaff, away be driven ;  
Like wheat, the righteous enter heaven.
- " O thou, my friend, ordained to preach  
    Eternal life to those  
Whom yet the joyful sound may reach,  
    So trouble their repose,  
That all who hear the word may feel  
Its power to wound, its power to heal ;  
Till, like the first-departed blest,  
With her they enter into rest.

" J. M.

" The Mount, Aug. 1. 1837."

## CHAP. LXXVIII.

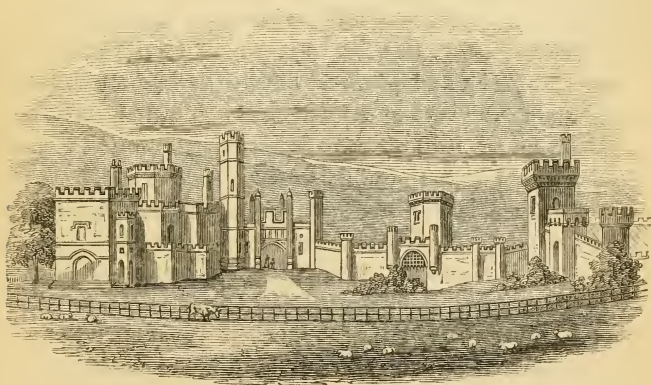
1837.

SHEFFIELD MANOR AND QUEEN'S TOWER. — CONVERSATION. — THE "LOT." — MR. STURGE AND THE MORAVIAN MISSIONARIES. — WATH. — BEGGING IMPOSTORS. — PLEASANT RURAL RAMBLE. — MONTGOMERY'S DESCRIPTION OF LOCAL SCENERY. — LETTER TO MR. MOXON. — CONVERSATION. — BALLOON ASCENT. — ESSAY ON THE "IMPERFECTNESS OF THE MATERIALS OF HISTORIC RECORD." — LETTER TO GEORGE BENNET. — SMEDLEY, THE POET. — JEREMIAH WIFFEN. — PUBLIC EDUCATION. — REVISION OF THE PENSION LIST. — EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS.

SHEFFIELD, notwithstanding the early historical interest of the district locally called Hallamshire, of which it is the modern capital, is remarkably devoid of architectural antiquities of either a civil or an ecclesiastical character. Of the castle, a somewhat formidable stronghold till the middle of the seventeenth century, not a fragment nor a sketch remains: but it has been "rebuilt," to use Montgomery's word, in the graphic description of the local topographer, Mr. Hunter. Associated with the castle in its later history and fortunes was the "Manor Lodge in the Park," a sort of summer residence of the Earls of Shrewsbury, and exhibiting, until of late years, a mass of mouldering remains not unpicturesque in themselves, and most delightfully situated on an eminence overlooking the adjacent town in the valley of the Don, and a wide, rich, and diversified tract of country beyond. The castle and the manor, between



them, have a special claim to a brief notice ; they are affectingly and for ever identified with the memory of Mary Queen of Scots, who spent at least a dozen years of her unhappy life a prisoner within their precincts. When first Montgomery came to reside at Sheffield, the ruins of the manor were in the condition represented by the vignette on the title-page of this volume ; and for many years they were the waymark of his suburban walks, and the scene of his poetical musings, and, as we have seen, the frequent subject of his conversations ; though in no instance, that we recollect, has he paid any complimentary tribute to the heroine of the locality. Very different, in this respect, was the course of his friend Samuel Roberts, who not only published a dense volume in favour of Mary's claims to our respect as well as our pity, but he raised a far more durable, costly, and conspicuous memorial of his zeal for her reputation in the form of a Gothic mansion, to which he gave the



QUEEN'S TOWER, SHEFFIELD PARK.

name of "Queen's Tower." This elegant building, some idea of the outline of which may be obtained from the an-

nexed cut, is doubtless the most remarkable monument to the memory of the celebrated woman to whose name it is dedicated, which illustrates the zeal of her many and enthusiastic admirers. This gem of a castle, as soon as it was barely habitable, in the summer of 1837, became the residence of Samuel Roberts, junior, and his lovely bride; and there, in the enjoyment of an elegant but unaffected hospitality, the revered poet and the writer of these remarks often met, the latter being complimented to recognise in his friend's drawing-room the portrait from which the likeness prefixed to this volume is taken.

Aug. 5. A conversation having arisen between the poet and Mr. Holland, relative to the right of Queen Victoria to marry one of her subjects, it led to some questions being put to Montgomery concerning the use of the "lot" among the Moravians in the selection of wives for the Brethren. He did not appear much inclined to discuss the subject, and still less to defend the wisdom or expediency of the practice in the abstract; remarking, however, that it was a custom of great antiquity, and one which was originally adopted by the immediate followers of Huss in the appointment of their ministers, and had often been practised by the United Brethren. He had himself known several missionaries who had received, at foreign stations, wives thus assigned to them by "lot" from among the single sisters at home; — so his brother Ignatius had taken his intelligent and truly excellent wife. He added, that whatever might be urged for or against the lot, either in mere flippancy of reasoning, or by persons unacquainted with its working in the community to which he belonged, he had never known, amongst the many couples so allotted, more than one marriage that could at all be regarded as other than decidedly a happy one; and

even that exception, as to its grounds, was certainly in no respect chargeable on the circumstances of the lot. Montgomery had himself, on three several occasions in early life, been himself the subject of decisions dependent on this pious sortilege: in the first place, as a candidate for episcopal confirmation; secondly, when, about fourteen years of age, he solicited membership in the Church of the Brethren; and thirdly, in later life, to some religious office.

When, in 1836, Joseph Sturge, the Quaker, went to the West Indies, on what he considered a religious — it certainly was a benevolent — mission, Montgomery obtained for him letters of introduction to the Moravian missionaries there. After his return to England, he took occasion not only to make in the yearly meeting of the Society of Friends, what might, perhaps, have been considered a “privileged statement” there, but afterwards repeated, in various public meetings, what he had seen of the working of the system of negro apprenticeships in the West Indies, including in those statements some disparaging allusions to the Methodist and Moravian missionaries. These statements, to say nothing of their correctness or otherwise, could hardly be regarded as really called for by the best friends of the negro race, much less justified toward the persons who were represented as having given in confidence the information upon which some of Mr. Sturge’s allegations were founded. On the 6th of June a public breakfast was got up in Birmingham, at which Mr. Sturge was present, and spoke at great length, and with considerable effect, on the signal wrongs and atrocious cruelties to which some of the negroes were exposed; at the same time holding up to special odium the directories of the missions above named.

Printed reports of the proceedings of the Birmingham

breakfast were circulated through the country; and when Montgomery called upon Mr. Holland, on the 31st of July, he mentioned that he had just been reading Mr. Sturge's address, and was sorry to find the insinuations which that gentleman was said to have thrown out elsewhere, repeated there. He was disposed to concur with the zealous Quaker in his views as to the working of the apprenticeship system; but at the same time he must demur to his assumption of a right to go to Jamaica and there converse as an accredited friend with unsuspecting persons, of whose confidential communications he thus unfairly availed himself to stimulate the cries of "Shame! shame!" against their best friends. Were he to meet with Mr. Sturge, as most likely he should, he might just ask him with what consistency he, as a Quaker, could thus readily calumniate the Moravian missionaries, who had, for upwards of 100 years, laboured—yea, perilled themselves "unto the death"—in the West Indies, during which time hundreds and thousands of negroes had been instructed in the knowledge of Christ their Saviour, many of whom would "in the end" stand with their teachers before a tribunal where the Moravians might perhaps find it easier to explain *their part* in connexion with—or, if their enemies would have it so, the perpetuation of—the system of slavery, than their impugnors to justify *their* long and profound indifference to Christian missions. On Mr. Holland intimating that Mr. Sturge might allude, in one of his remarks, to the fact of Moravians having been owners of slaves, Montgomery replied, that he never heard of more than two such parties in England,—the allied families of Barham and Foster, who, he believed, inherited a plantation in Jamaica. *Holland*: "But did not the Moravian missionaries themselves, at one period, hold pro-

perty in slaves?" *Montgomery*: "They did in some cases, where they required personal services, which, while slavery was at its height, they could not otherwise have obtained at all. But in this they only differed from the Methodist missionaries—that the latter, instead of having slaves of their own, hired them of others. I recollect having been told of the purchase of slaves by Moravian missionaries: on one occasion the Brethren wanted a couple of servants; they went to the market, and paid the price of two negroes, with whom it was arranged that they should be immediately manumitted. Slavery, although a great evil, which ought of course to be entirely abolished, is not sinful *per se*; and if the Moravians are to be thus denounced because they have once held slaves, let them in fairness only share the guilt with Methodists and even Quakers themselves, who in earlier periods were involved in similar charges."

July 26. *Holland*: "I have just been at Wath, sir. The place is very much altered since you resided there." *Montgomery*: "I should expect to find considerable alterations: it is now more than thirty years since I was there. I went to visit Joshua Hunt on the occasion of his marriage; indeed, I sat with him and his bride to receive their company." *Holland*: "But you were not at the wedding, I presume?" *Montgomery*: "No, I was not; though I afterwards accompanied another member of the family to the altar at Sheffield." *Holland*: "I was not aware you had ever been officially engaged as a party on such an occasion." *Montgomery*: "Yes, indeed I have; and only within the last three days I have received a letter from an individual, soliciting me to give a bride away—an application that would certainly have surprised me, had I not long since been aware that there are persons who are never afraid



of asking for anything." *Holland*: "I trust you would not object to give *me* a suitable lady under such circumstances, if I were to ask you?" *Montgomery*: "If you will, as I advise you, marry Miss ———, I will do that and more for you, with the greatest pleasure; but I know you won't take my advice."

In common with many other good men, comparatively little hackneyed in the deceits of the world, and still less willing to have their charity quenched by suspicion, Montgomery possessed an integrity and simplicity of heart which not seldom made him the dupe of designing individuals, especially of those who sought to excite his benevolent sympathies by tales of personal distress. A striking instance of this kind occurred during the summer of this year. On the 29th of August Montgomery called upon Mr. Holland, and pointing to a paragraph in the "*Sheffield Mercury*,"\* "Do you," said he, with evident emotion, "know anything of the foundation of this statement?" On being answered in the negative, the poet added, "The circumstance so exactly accords with what happened to myself a few weeks since, that I cannot doubt but that the parties described are identical: indeed, the reading

\* The article referred to was the following:— "*Administering Relief*.—As a certain individual, well known to us, was traversing High Street, he was accosted by a female, who besought him tenderly to grant pecuniary aid to the amount of one penny, for the purpose of releasing a letter then lying at the post-office. Conceiving that the receipt of the letter might contribute to relieve the 'heart depressed' of one who was in expectation of receiving information from a dear husband, revered parent, or perchance from a neglectful lover, the penny was given. Judge, however, of our informant's surprise when, instead of the female proceeding to the post-office, where any of these anticipations would be realised, he saw her dive into a dram-shop."— *Sheffield Mercury*, Aug. 26. 1837.



of that paragraph has disturbed me in an extraordinary degree." He then proceeded to relate, how that on the evening of the day on which the interment of King William IV. took place, he was passing along Norfolk Street with his nephew, when he was accosted by one of two women, who, in a most heart-moving tone, besought him in the name of charity to give her twopence, to enable her to get from the post-office a letter, which was lying there for her, with a black seal, and communicating, she had no doubt, intelligence of the death of her daughter, whom she knew to have been some time at the point of death! Montgomery immediately gave the woman something more than the pence, accompanied with an expression of sympathy and consolation. She had not long been gone, when it occurred to him that his charity had fallen far short of the necessities of the petitioner's case. "I had indeed," said he, "found her the means of obtaining the letter; but how was the poor woman, who had not twopence to expend on an object so near her heart, to get to Barnsley to bury her daughter? I felt a degree of self-reproof, that it had not occurred to me to give her at least the means of making the journey thither. During the evening, while I sat in my room, listening to the sound of the muffled bells and the solemn firing of minute guns, my mind still dwelt painfully on the circumstances of the poor woman. 'Here,' thought I, 'is an occasion of national mourning, involving thousands and tens of thousands of individuals in one common sympathy with the proceedings of the royal funeral, at this moment in progress from the ancient Castle to the royal sepulchre at Windsor; and yet, amidst all these individuals, I know there is *one* mourning mother—there may be many—who feels no interest and who takes no part in all this national movement,

because she is suffering from a nearer and more immediate bereavement; and while this afflicted woman has not even the means of reaching the place where the dead body of her daughter lies, the price of the jewels or other female ornaments which will probably this night be lost from the dresses of persons taking part in or gazing on the cavalcade at Windsor, would more than make the poor creature happy.' So fully," he added, "did this idea take possession of my mind and so deeply did it affect my feelings, that I had half resolved to write a meditation on the subject; and now, after all, I am constrained by this paragraph to suspect the woman of being an impostor! Really, Mr. Holland, circumstances like this are almost enough to make one doubt one's own sincerity and that of every other person whom we meet or read about."

Aug. 16. The following extract from a letter addressed by Mr. Holland to Mr. Everett, may be properly introduced here:—

"I was not aware before to-day that Montgomery had ever entertained the intention of residing out of Sheffield during the period when he was actually in business. About a week ago I intimated to the poet that I should like to walk with him as far as the Old Park Wood, a favourite scene of his solitary rambles in former years. He kindly consented, and we fixed upon this afternoon for our walk; of course I expected we should have had no other companion, but on going to dine at The Mount I found Mr. George Bennet there and prepared to accompany us. About three o'clock we started, discussing, as we set out, the great alterations which the lapse of forty years had made on Crookes Moor Side, at the commencement of that period a comparatively naked and houseless waste, the scene of 'Sheffield Races,' now mostly covered with beautiful villas, clusters of trees, and numerous small dwelling-houses. We presently passed in succession the large and small reservoirs belonging to the

Sheffield Water Works Company, from the head of one of which Holland made the sketch for his published picture of Sheffield.\* Having examined, discussed, and left behind us 'our dams,' as my companions somewhat fondly designated works in which they were both shareholders, our way lay past a neat villa residence, still called — from a transaction which once took place on its site — 'Mushroom Hall.' Mr. Bennet said he recollected, although very young at the time, having gone with great numbers of persons from the town to see the frail cabin which, as it had sprung up over-night on the waste, being moreover tenanted, and having smoke issuing from the chimney in the morning, its cunning builder contended gave him a claim to the foundation plot and right of commonage besides! Montgomery forestalled any speculations upon which Mr. Bennet and myself might probably have entered in defence of so very reasonable a claim, by assuring us that the lord of the manor at once demanded, and always received, a yearly acknowledgment from the man who had effected this singular encroachment on his waste.

"Leaving Mushroom Hall, we threaded our way amidst the gardens behind Belfield House, and proceeded in the direction of the Infirmary, our attention being chiefly directed to the projection or progress of various new streets, and our conversation to the amazing increase which within a few years had taken place in the value of land thereabout, some of the ground being now worth not less than 1000*l.* per acre over what it would have been forty years since. Passing behind the Infirmary — the scene of Montgomery's benevolent labours as Chairman of the Weekly Board of Management — we presently crossed the river Don at Hill-foot Bridge, and found ourselves close upon the Old Park Wood. This, as we have before had occasion to notice, was a favourite scene of poetical meditation with Montgomery during the earlier years of his residence in Sheffield, and before the altered character of the adjoining neighbourhood

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\* The original painting is in the possession of Mr. John Hoole, of Upperthorpe, near Sheffield.

had made this way anything but the agreeable solitude it once was.\* On his attention being called to the striking correspondency between this locality and a pleasing passage in one of his published pieces, the poet at once admitted the identity of the scenery and the description.† When we had

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\* Since the above was written the Manchester Railway has been carried through the wood.

† The passage in question is the following: it occurs in a very pleasing paper, entitled "Home, Country, all the World," originally published in the "Amulet" for 1831:—"He who retires, as I have often done, on a bright summer evening, into the depth of one of our Hallamshire woods, while he saunters along in the dream-like repose of a brown study, or leans against an old oak in the fine abstraction of severer thought, might imagine himself alone and in silence, merely because his eye and ear were *unobservant* of motions and murmurs perceptible on every hand. But were he to pause at one of those cheerful openings, where, from a small patch of ground, beneath a hand-breadth of blue sky, in a little amphitheatre of trees, the great world seems hermetically excluded, he would soon find himself in the very midst of the joy and activity, the labour, fatigue, and anxiety of life. At first, the dazzling dance of insects in the sunshine, and their musical drone in the shade, might surprise him into a feeling of sympathetic delight; but the flitting forms and richer melody of birds would quickly charm away his attention, to hearken to the sweetest inarticulate tones in creation. If he were not startled from his entrancement by a shrew-mouse suddenly running across his foot, or the glittering undulation of a snake among the withered leaves across the pathway, his eye would be unconsciously drawn off, and carried out of the forest, by discovering green glimpses of adjacent fields, and shining tracks of the river,—here, a spire of one of the churches; there, the tower of another; clusters of house-tops; steam-engine chimneys, like obelisks; and distant hills, cultivated or barren,—through the loop-holes of intermingling boughs and broken foliage around him. Presently, voices and sounds of all kinds would assail him, rising in Babylonish confusion from the populous valleys and village-crowned eminences, but gradually distinguished, if his ear nicely pursued them, through their innumerable varieties, harmonious and dissonant, loud and low, mournful and lively;—the rustling of winds among the leaves, the gush of waters down a

emerged from the shade of the trees, and were entered upon the open fields, we had before us toward the west as fine and diversified a view as can well be conceived, closed by the deep purple moors in the distance, and intersected in the foreground by the river Don, and some of its most picturesque tributaries. In the middle distance was the rocky eminence called 'Loxley (or Locksley) Edge,' a portion of the wild tract supposed to have included the birthplace of the *Locksley* of the ballad of Robin Hood; but more remarkable in later years for the conspicuous gibbet of 'Frank Fearn,' a murderer. I asked Montgomery whether he recollected old Joe Mather's verses in reference to Loxley Edge? He said he did; and that he once heard Mather \* sing one of his songs

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weir, the barking of dogs, the crowing of cocks, the cries of children, the chimes of the church clock, or the knoll of a death bell; a gun, a drum, a bugle-horn, a flourish of trumpets from the barracks, the whistling of carters, the rumbling of carriages, the ringing of anvils, the reverberating thumps of tilt-hammers, with an indistinct but deep perpetual under-sound, like a running bass, composed of all these blended noises, covering the whole, and constituting the 'busy hum of men' thronging the streets of the busy town below, or travelling on the numerous high roads branching from it. These would form, altogether, a concert inexpressibly captivating, by the associations which they would awaken in the mind of him who could listen to them as *one of the millions of sentient beings*, whether brute or intelligent, that inhabit the little locality, exquisitely picturesque and genuinely English, within the precincts of Sheffield. Though in solitude himself, his delight would not be solitary, but social in the highest and purest degree. Though not a living creature within the circuit of the horizon were thinking of him at that moment, he would be thinking of *them*, of *them all*, and *all together*. His joy would be a mysterious sympathy with all their joys, an ineffable interest in all their occupations, and a cordial goodwill to everything that lived, and moved, and breathed within his *sensorium*."

\* Joseph Mather was, as already mentioned, a well-known maker of satirical ballads, which he sung and sold in the streets of Sheffield at the end of the last century. His compositions were sometimes offensively *coarse*, in the worst sense of the term, and at the



on the occasion of that riot in the streets of Sheffield for the description of which, in the 'Iris,' he was himself fined and imprisoned. He had forgotten all about the song except one stanza, which he remembered well enough : —

“ ‘ This armed banditti, filled with spleen,  
At his command, like bloodhounds keen  
Inspired to crown the horrid scene,  
A shower of bullets fired,’ \* &c.

Montgomery having jocularly cited the foregoing verse, immediately added, in a serious tone, — ‘ Poor Mather ! he was once a professor of religion, I believe a Methodist ; but he was tempted to the ale-house, fell into sin, and his songs attest how deeply he sunk : yet in some of them there are expressions which show that he could not entirely throw off all remembrance of better things. He lived, however, to repent of his folly ; and good Walter Griffith † told me that

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same time not seldom directly personal. These characteristics with various oddities of the minstrel, such as riding on an ox while hawking and singing his productions, made him popular with the multitude, who would but rarely have been misled by his songs had they always been as unobjectionable as the following : —

“ Last Easter Sunday, with bat-stick and trip,  
Towards Pitsmoor firs I did eagerly skip,  
But soon got fast in a quickset hedge ;  
A Methodist preacher, good natured and stout,  
Took hold of my shoulders and lifted me out,  
And said, Young man, take advice from a stranger,  
Permit me with freedom to tell thee thy danger,—  
Thou art in the road to Loxley Edge,” &c.

There are several stanzas of like character, containing good advice, and ending—

“ Had Fearne ta'en this method, his life had not ended  
At Tyburn, near York, nor in chains been suspended,  
Betwixt heaven and earth, upon Loxley Edge.”

\* Vol. I. p. 235. of these Memoirs.

† Rev. Walter Griffith, a Wesleyan preacher.



he visited the compunctious ballad-monger in his last illness, and believed that there was hope in his death.' On our way home beyond Pitsmoor, Montgomery pointed out a small farmstead, called 'The Elms,' with a house which he told us he was once very desirous of occupying: it struck his fancy on account of its middle character 'between a cottage and a hall,' and as being within a reasonable riding distance of his place of business at a time when exercise and fresh air were indispensable for the maintenance of his health."

*James Montgomery to Edward Moxon.*

"The Mount, Sheffield, September 12. 1837.

"DEAR SIR,

"Accept my best thanks for one of the best book-presents which I have received for some years, the sight of such arrivals generally causing an instinctive shudder lest they should make a double demand upon my patience and my good nature, of neither of which have I much to spare, having continual need of both for home consumption, as I am sufficiently qualified, and grudge any neighbourly assistance, in exercising that ingenious art after the most approved and vexatious practice. It is hard enough to be required to read some books which are sent to notorious persons like me by strangers with the kindest intentions, and with unanswerably flattering acknowledgments of the pleasure which the authors have enjoyed in the perusal of my own. This small penalty—for after all it is out of small things that a self-tormentor manufactures his miseries—might be borne, but it is generally accompanied with a humble petition for something like a critique on the merits of the work. Censorious criticism is the easiest, and laudatory the most difficult, in that chartered libertinism which has become at once so vulgar and so fashionable since the appearance of the 'Edinburgh Review,' with its menacing inscription — '*Judex damnatur*, &c.,' next to that over the gates of Dante's 'Inferno' the most terrible to those who *must* enter that can be imagined, since in both cases all are treated as *nocentes* — with this difference, however, that

it is possible in the former court a verdict of acquittal may be returned in favour of those who (contrary to the merciful law of our land in criminal procedures) are deemed guilty till they are proved innocent; whereas none are allowed to pass 'hell's portals' till their guilt has been established beyond the hope of justification. Censorious criticism in the cases above referred to is out of the question; and it requires all the choicest words in the English dictionary, with the most perfect command of them, to 'hint a fault and hesitate dislike' when that must be done, as well as to give the utmost 'honour due,' without violating sincerity, to what is worthy of any measure of commendation, where nothing rises above the excellence attainable by all minds that are drawn to the cultivation of fine literature by an ingenuous or even a factitious love of it. This refers especially to volumes of verse which come to me so often that the mere recollection of them has made my pen run away with me thus far. The volumes of Charles Lamb's Letters, included in the Memoir of his Life by no ordinary hand, came doubly recommended by their own worth, which insured to them an eager perusal, and the kindness which prompted you to send so acceptable a present in the most acceptable manner,—that is, without imposing on me any obligation but that of gratitude, a burthen which I am very willing to bear till my life's end. I shall not pretend to give an opinion of the merits of this legacy of a genius which, if not of the first order, was of a species as rare as the first; and if not unique, was less like any other than the resemblance between the nearest two of the rest that were at all akin,—for example, of the school to which it belonged, and in which were reared the master spirits of the age—Wordsworth, Southey, and Coleridge; Scott and Byron being followers of these, though themselves originals and masters each of a new school in their day, yet acting upon a public mind prepared by the noble innovations of the former upon the antiquated models of composition, to admit yet bolder and more remote (from common usage) experiments in verse, than even the Lake Poets had attempted. Indeed it would

require very nice tact and elaborate scrutiny to detect, single out, and exhibit the peculiarities of this writer's style, manner of thinking, and process of combining his fancies, to 'elevate and surprise' (in a better sense than 'Mr. Bayes' did) his readers with 'something rich and strange,' where nothing of the kind was expected. All that he says, in these letters at least, and in the best of his prose essays, appears so natural and yet so artificial — natural in essence and artificial in form — that his mind may be considered of a nondescript character. He seems to give us no *first thoughts* (*seconds* are not always best, though the proverb says they are): all within him 'suffers' something like that 'sea-change' in Ariel's song in the 'Tempest,' which converts what were 'bones' into 'corals,' and what were 'eyes' into 'pearls.' This arose from his ruminating habits; it is manifest that he delighted to dwell long and dotingly upon little circumstances of which ordinary folks take no heed, till he found in them all that he sought, that is, all that he *made* of them, as the lover does of his mistress, who is at least as much the ideal as the actual object of his affection. I know not to what to compare Lamb's faculty of observation better than to the Argus-eye of a fly, microscopic and multiform, in which, from every lens on its convexity, the same object, seen at different angles, presents different aspects. From the minute distinctions and remote resemblances of these, he collected with curious skill and antic taste his witty analogies and his paradoxical similitudes. He was an original thinker; but all his thoughts were little — not from his incapacity of comprehending what was magnificent either in the world of reality or of imagination, but because he had the power, and delighted in the capricious exercise, of reducing what was greatest into the least possible compass; and it is surprising to find what numerous examples of the sublime and beautiful occur amidst his quaintnesses both in his familiar epistles and in his elaborate essays. With all his affectation of preference for city life, city scenes, and city enjoyments, the love of Nature was at his heart — aye, at the bottom of it; for when that heart was turned upside down among the

lakes and mountains of Westmoreland, out came that love in all its passion and purity, as may be seen in the letter to Manning on his return to town (vol. i. p. 221.), which, according to my poor judgment, is worth twenty ‘Dissertations on Roast Pig,’ though worded in his inveterately whimsical, and sometimes pretty, sometimes perversely artificial manner. There are passages in it worthy of any one of the Lake *Trinmvirs* (W. S. & C.) in the best mood of his own mind. The brief note to Coleridge preceding this (p. 220.) is equally precious, though but a spark compared with the larger jewel to which it is appended. How natural, true, and beautiful withal, is the slight allusion to the region where he found that ‘there is such a thing as that which tourists call *romantic* ;’ beginning, ‘I feel that I shall remember your mountains,’ and ending with ‘are shelved in my brain.’ It would be disingenuous if I were to deny that there are many little things in all Lamb’s works which do not suit my taste, my feelings, or my religious views. I am glad that he has found so discreet and indulgent a biographer as Serjeant Talfourd. The kindly spirit in which the whole case has been conducted by him, is equally honourable to the living and the dead. In the cant phrase of criticism, ‘it is refreshing’ to meet with so much heart in one of the learned profession who is far advanced on the road to riches and honour, by the exercise of talents in a direction so much more worthily rewarded with present fame and ready money, as to make most of those who courted the unportioned muses in their youth, abandon them when they feel themselves rising at the bar, with the woolsack and a coronet in view. Lamb’s editor, however, is of a better spirit ; and to justify his brave departure from ‘vulgar bounds,’ he has shown by his ‘*Ion*’ that he need not fear it being said of him that a good lawyer was spoilt to make a bad poet. If you have an opportunity of creeping under *our* learned friend’s wig, and getting at his ear, I wish you would hint to him that sixty years from an author’s death seems, even to one who is an author (though he has no right to calculate upon his having an interest in a contingency so remote), too long a term for

his heirs, executors, &c. to have a monopoly in his works. Not one book in a hundred is of value beyond the present limit of copyright; but such as *are* must of course be of *great* value pecuniarily to the author and his family, and morally or intellectually to the public, otherwise they would die the natural death of other short-lived compositions. I would say at once that a monopoly of that continuance might justly be allowed for the benefit of the author or his successors in the property of his productions, if the interest, nay the right, of the public in the same could be secured — namely, that there should be kept up in the market a supply of successive editions, and on reasonable terms. Many valuable books might be for a while neglected during the authors' lives, which, under other circumstances, or at the cost and hazard of spirited publishers, might be revived and even added to the stock of staple literature, when their merits were better known. Now these might be neglected by the owners of the copyright; and as none durst infringe upon that,—and probably the boldest speculator would not venture to give a valuable consideration for the purchase of it, or for the privilege of issuing a single edition,—such books would be lost to the world. Now if the term of copyright be extended considerably beyond the author's life (which, with due consideration, I think is exceedingly desirable), there might be a provision made for the *chance* at least of no work of real excellence or utility being extinguished by neglect of the author's heirs or assigns. It might be required that the proprietors of posthumous copyrights should *re-enter* their respective books at Stationers' Hall every (five) years, till the expiration of the term; and also (perhaps) keep on sale a moderate stock of the same. In case of the neglect of such proprietors renewing the entry at Stationers' Hall, any other person might have the power to publish one edition of the work, and no more,—if the proprietors again re-entered their claim to it. This is merely a loose hint, but it is of some importance I think both to authors and to the public. He were an author undeserving indeed of public approbation who for any



reversion of a few pounds to his posterity of the third generation, could sacrifice the hope of being read by the second. I have one more hint, and I confess it is a selfish one, nor am I ashamed of the selfishness, — namely, that the *past* as well as the *future* works of all *living authors* be included in any enlarged term of copyright. Pray forgive this crude letter : I had not meant that it should be half so long.

“ I am, truly, your obliged friend and servant,

“ J. MONTGOMERY.

“ P. S. If we are to have a copyright of threescore years, the term had better be calculated from the birth of each of his offspring, rather than from the parent's death ; for when a child, even in the shape of a book, has reached that stage, it is surely time for it to be settled in the world.

“ Edward Moxon, Esq., Dover Street, London.”

Sept. 30. Montgomery called upon Mr. Holland, and in the course of conversation mentioned that he had received from a lady, who evidently wrote in a state of high excitement, a tragedy, which he was requested to read, and give his opinion upon. *Montgomery*: “ I had hoped that I should have been spared the task, in consequence of a letter I had written, in reply to one received from the authoress some time since ; however, she has not only sent me a tragedy to read, but, *horresco referens* ! she says she has several others by her.” *Holland*: “ So that although you never wrote a tragedy, you have a fair prospect of some reading in that line before you.” *Montgomery*: “ No ; I certainly never attempted a tragedy.” *Holland*: “ But did you not in early life compose a drama of some kind.” *Montgomery*: “ Yes, and I only destroyed the MS. about a week ago. I sat down and read it through ; and though it contained some passages that I regretted to lose, there were others that I could not now approve ; determined, therefore, they should never rise up against me, I deli-



berately tore, and put the whole into the fire, leaf by leaf—an operation which, after all, felt as if I were burning my ten fingers.”

Oct. 2. Montgomery presided at a Wesleyan Missionary Meeting. In commencing his address to the audience, he said : —

“This day has been one of considerable excitement in this town and neighbourhood; and from the elevated spot where I dwell, such a spectacle has been presented as well in the congregation of human beings to witness a striking object of attraction, as by that object itself, as is rarely exhibited in Sheffield. For more than two hours, ten thousand eyes, yea ten thousand twice and again twice told, were intently gazing, and the thoughts and hopes of all parties were fixed on one interesting object. Without at present meddling at all with the morality of ballooning, it was, I may say, an animating spectacle, when the mighty globe rose majestically into space, to witness such a magnificent instance of the triumph of science, by means of which man, overcoming all the difficulties of his position on the earth, can rise aloft, sail through the fields of air, and from the sublime elevation of the clouds, or the ethereal blue above the clouds, can look down upon the earth, under circumstances with which few persons are favoured—it was, I say, an animating exhibition of the triumph of science—would it were more worthily employed!—especially when, after a momentary silence, the shouts of the assembled thousands greeted the intrepid female whose aerial ascent they then witnessed. As I came down from my dwelling to this meeting, and passed through the crowds returning from witnessing the spectacle to which I have adverted, I could not but contrast the interest excited by the scene I was leaving, with the importance of that object which I, in common with so many others, had in view in coming hither this evening.”

On the 6th of October Montgomery read before the Sheffield Literary and Philosophical Society a paper on

the "Imperfectness of Historical Records," being, in fact, the substance of an essay originally written for the Manchester Philological Society, of which, as already mentioned, our friend had been elected a member several years before. Mr. Holland, who was present at the reading of the essay in Sheffield, was particularly struck with one passage relative to the alleged mutual relationship of the whole family of human beings in such a manner that whatever affected one link of the living chain might be said to affect every other link — or something like this. To the correctness of the notion thus advanced, so far as he understood it, Samuel Bailey, Esq., objected; and also to the universality of the broad principle laid down in the essay, namely, that the evidence or record of historical events being once lost, a knowledge of the events themselves could never be recovered. Montgomery, in reply, said the passage relative to the concatenation of effects amongst human beings was that which he was least disposed to defend, though he still thought it maintainable in the sense in which he intended it. Of the correctness of the general principle laid down in his paper he was more confident. In illustration of his position, he instanced the well-known historical narrative of the saving of Rome from the attempted entrance of the Gauls, in consequence of the cackling of the geese in the night, while the dogs were silent. This event, he contended, as well as the circumstances connected with the celebrated passage of the Rubicon, and others that might be mentioned, could never have been certainly known to us had the explicit testimony of history concerning them been once lost. We might, indeed, have had medals, and the records of practices relative to geese and dogs, long afterwards existing in Rome, arising out of the former occurrence, and probably striking allusions

to the latter circumstances, and upon these would doubtless have been written ingenious dissertations, and various — possibly correct — inferences deduced; but, after all, we never could have had the certainty of those events which we now admit to arise from the direct testimony of history. With reference to artificial inventions, or discoveries in science, the case was different; a knowledge of these might be lost, and restored again — the composition of the “Greek fire,” for example, of which we read so much in ancient history, appears to be unknown to the moderns; but there is nothing to prevent its re-discovery now, or at any future period. Mr. Bailey thought that although Mr. Montgomery’s position might be true as to some historical events, it did not apply to all: indeed, he thought that geology, for example, was constantly presenting us with the evidence of facts of which we have no record in history. On being asked to mention a particular instance, Mr. Bailey named the mammoth, the very existence of which was neither noticed in history nor tradition, and yet the frequent discovery of its remains proves the former existence of the animal beyond all doubt. Mr. Montgomery said he thought this was hardly a fact in opposition to his statement: the disinterment of the remains of the mammoth and other extinct species of animals afforded no *historical* information whatever, any more than does the chance finding of a recent human skeleton, being rather analogous to the discoveries of long-lost medals or long-hidden monuments of actions or individuals, of which we still know little or nothing but by inference.

*James Montgomery to George Bennet.*

“ The Mount, Oct. 14. 1837.

“ MY DEAR FRIEND,

“ Your letter with its double date was twice welcome, because it was the record of two visits in spirit to ‘The Mount,’ to hold communion with me in that manner which minds may do at any distance between their respective bodies and the antipodes. Even in personal intercourse it takes some time for oral sounds from lips on one side of the fireplace to reach ears on the other, and ‘winged words’ on paper are not relatively much slower in travelling by post between Hackney and Sheffield than sounds are also relatively slower in beating their way through the air than light is in glancing from the sun to the earth. You are a philosopher, and can calculate the precise proportions in their respective degrees of comparison, which are far beyond my poor arithmetic. You may also be able to find out the pertinency of these paradoxical fancies at the outset of my letter; I can only say that, sitting down to write to you the first thoughts in the first words, these things, like John Bunyan’s dainty devices, while penning his inimitable dream,—

“ ‘ Came into my head,

And thence unto my fingers trick-el-ed,’ &c.

I cannot refer to the context; but it is a most curious description of the whole process, mental and manual, by which the best as well as the worst works of literature are produced. You will find it, with some other secrets of authorship, ingenuously told in that good man’s rhyming epistle to his gentle readers, either before the first part, or between that and the second, of the ‘Pilgrim’s Progress.’ Everything must have a beginning, and, whether it have a middle or not, *almost* everything must have an end. I sat down in what has been called a fit of ‘humorous sadness,’ a frame of feeling with which I hope you are unacquainted, though with each of its elements, separately, you must be familiar,—for you would not be a *wise* man if you had not known

‘sadness,’ nor an *English* man if you had not some portion of that undefinable national characteristic called humour. Well, but having nothing particular to say at this time,—unless I were to play with you in this epistle at the old game of ‘Neighbour, I am come to torment you,’—quite as rational a one as the ‘Royal Game of Goose,’—by telling you all my ailments of mind, body, and estate, real and imaginary, since you returned from Sheffield,—I have been willing rather to write riddles to puzzle you with my whims of the moment, than to enumerate my ‘miserics,’ which are anything but momentary, though I confess many of them—most, indeed, when they are resolutely met—are of no moment at all. Be this as it may, ever since you left us I have been involved, beyond the average number, with meetings, anniversaries, and committees connected with such and other public engagements, so that I have had little time and less spirit to *do* or *get* any good, by choice, in any other way; and if I have failed either to *get* or *do* on these occasions, my days and weeks have been wofully misspent. Perhaps, however, it is well for me to be thus exercised; it would be, I know, if I rightly improved these—what shall I call them?—*providential accidents* of my situation in life,—a long-standing among my townspeople here, and a certain character which has grown upon me rather than grown out of me, because I am one of ‘those who *appear* righteous before men;’ but ‘God knoweth my *heart*.’ O, how humbling ought these awful words of our Saviour to be to me! and how ought I to fear and tremble, yea, even when I rejoice, to tremble, and lie in the dust at his feet, lest, after all, his last word to me should be ‘depart!’ . . . I thank you for your over-sea stanzas on American freedom and American slaveholding. Mr. George Thompson is here now, *incensing* us on the latter subject, as well as upon the atrocious violations of faith on the part of our own colonists, in too many instances, respecting that new and anomalous form of slavery—slavery hideous in all its shapes, and most hideous in disguise—under the legal fiction of apprenticeship. I have not yet heard from the Tract Society; indeed I am in no hurry

about it ; but I am jealous lest the copy should be lost : you will take care of that.

“ I am very truly your friend,

“ J. MONTGOMERY.

“ George Bennet, Esq, Grove Place, Hackney.”

In the earlier part of this year Montgomery was applied to for a communication in aid of the “Tribute,” a volume of poems contributed by various authors, and published under the editorial auspices of the Earl of Northampton, in behalf of the family of the Rev. Edward Smedley, who died during the preceding year. The deceased had been known to our poet, not only as the author of “Prescience” and as a sneerer at evangelical efforts, but at a later period as a reviewer, who insinuated that Montgomery had quoted a work which did not exist, and blundered in fixing the latitude and longitude of a place : in both cases he was compelled to acknowledge *his own* mistake, by a communication in which it was hinted that “knowledge of books, and even of geography, was quite as necessary for a critic as for a poet.” Of course, this incident, even if remembered by our friend at this time, did not affect his conduct : he, at once sent the stanzas entitled “A Message from the Moon,” founded, as we have elsewhere mentioned, on a thought which crossed the author’s mind while he was watching the great eclipse of the sun, May 15. 1836. When the “Tribute” made its appearance, it contained a copy of verses, by Miss Boyle, entitled “Our Father’s at the Helm ; founded on an Anecdote.” This anecdote had been versified by others\* : and a few years before a version of it had been published, with the name of Montgomery at the head —

\* A neat metrical version of it is introduced into the Third Lesson Book of the Irish National Schools.



though whether as subject, authority, or versifier, was left for the reader to make out. The verses, however, were not Montgomery's, but the story was; yet could he not conceive how the poet had come at the fact, which he had not mentioned, as he believed, in public: and on the appearance of Miss Boyle's version, he expressed some curiosity to know where she had picked up the anecdote. Mr. Holland hereupon addressed, through Lord Northampton, a letter to that lady on the subject, to which she returned the following answer:—

“Palace, Hampton Court, Oct. 11. 1837.

“SIR,

“I lose no time in acknowledging the receipt of your letter, and replying to the question which it contains. About six years ago, at a church not very far distant, I heard the anecdote, which, to the best of my belief and recollection, was stated as a fact, from the lips of the preacher; who, by mentioning the circumstance as a beautiful instance of faith, drew the moral which I have endeavoured to convey in the verses which Lord Northampton placed in the ‘Tribute.’ At least three years after I had written my little poem, a friend sent me a copy of some small periodical, in which the same subject was touched upon in verse, with no name annexed. I have never had the pleasure of reading those you allude to, by Montgomery.\*

“I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

“MARY L. BOYLE.

“John Holland, Esq.”

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\* This passage in the letter implies a misapprehension on one point: Mr. Holland did not either allude to or suppose the existence of any verses on the subject by Montgomery, but merely stated that his name had been printed with such verses as authority for the anecdote.

*James Montgomery to George Bennet.*

"The Mount, Sheffield, Nov. 11. 1837.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"I have to thank you for several fresh tokens of your kindness to me, and I avail myself of the opportunity of Mr. J. A. Miller's visit to London to acknowledge them in the way you will most approve—the fewest and simplest words. . . . Yesterday I received the parcel containing the copies of the tract which I committed to your hands when we parted here. You express yourself so cautiously on this subject, that I am afraid both the trouble and expense of the whole affair has been thrown upon yourself, though you seem determined that I shall not know the obligation. My *heart* knows it, and acknowledges it with that feeling and no other which the delicacy and generosity of your conduct cannot fail to awaken. I am not curious to ascertain particulars at this crisis of the affair; I only say, I did not anticipate the obstacles against the 'Great Word' by the Religious Tract Society. No doubt the committee did well in declining to undertake it; but I cannot help thinking they would have done better had they given thousands and millions who may now never see it, the advantage of such a testimony to the excellency of the Holy Scriptures as the poem contains. But pray understand me,—I mean that they did well in deciding according to their consciences; but that if their consciences would have permitted, they would have done better by coming to a different determination. Pray thank the Rev. Mr. Pritchett for his communication respecting 'Jerusalem, my happy home!' Several years ago a copy of Burkitt's 'Poor Man's Help' was sent to me by a friend, containing the verses [in their usual shape]. But I have what I believe to be the original of the other parts of the hymn. It was sent me by Mr. Mather from Glasgow, and consisted of a series of stanzas, very humble in point of versification, containing all the elements of the poem in its subsequent transmigrations, and some of the most emphatic and characteristic

phrases. The author, I was informed, was a Scottish minister, I think his name was *Dick*\*, of whom it is enough to say, that he was a man of God indeed; his last words, in answer to an inquiry concerning the hope that was in him, in the hour of death, were these: ‘I have taken all my good deeds, and all my bad ones, and have thrown them together in one heap, and fled from them to the foot of the cross for mercy!’ O, my dear friend! what a confession of faith; let us *go* and *do* likewise, that at our departure we may be enabled through almighty grace to leave the same testimony behind us. . . . Now, if this piece in the course of a century and a half has undergone such changes, what may not your American stanzas be destined to suffer? I only wish they may be made no worse by every attempt to mend them: I should not have presumed to try my hand, had you not expressly requested me; and the request was a command, which I shall be glad to have obeyed, if any of my suggestions are acceptable to you; but do not alter a word except upon conviction.

“I am truly, your obliged friend,

“J. MONTGOMERY.

“George Bennet, Esq., Hackney.”

On the death of the accomplished Quaker poet, J. H. Wiffen, a circular letter was addressed to Montgomery, soliciting him to aid, in any way he thought fit, the sale of such portions of the published works of the bard of Woburn as he left behind him, the property of his widow.† He did so: and also addressed a letter to

\* Rev. David Dickson, of Irvine.

† Montgomery had known something of this lady long before she became the wife of Mr. Wiffen. In 1809 she happened to be with her parents at Harrogate, their lodgings being under the same roof with those of our friend; and as they had a mutual introduction, the casual and courteous intercourse of visitors took place between the parties. The pretty Quakeress was just stepping into womanhood. Lively, full of sentiment, fond of poetry and enthusiastic in expression, it was natural that she should cul-

Wiffen's brother: E. L. Bulwer, Thomas Campbell, Allan Cunningham, and Samuel Rogers did the same, and extracts from these letters were printed as testimonies to the merits of the deceased poet.

*James Montgomery to B. B. Wiffen.*

"The Mount, near Sheffield, Nov. 21. 1837.

". . . Anything that I could say or do to serve the family, and to honour the memory, of the late Jeremiah Wiffen, I would most gladly contribute. Some of his juvenile pieces, in the volume of 'Poems by Three Friends,' I remember noticing as tokens of no mean capability of improvement, and pledges therefore of greater things at a future day. Those tokens were not deceptive, and those pledges were redeemed in the best manner by the progressive excellence of his succeeding compositions, in which manly talent was well and worthily employed. Of translations of 'Tasso's Jerusalem' I have publicly given my opinion that his is unquestionably the best.

"I am respectfully, your friend and servant,

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"B. B. Wiffen, Esq., Woburn."

In the month of November, this year, considerable excitement prevailed in Sheffield on the subject of National Education, chiefly in consequence of the proceedings at more than one public meeting which had

tivate the acquaintance and enjoy the companionship of Montgomery; and their walks together afforded much innocent amusement to their friends. One morning she came to the poet, and told him that her parents were gone away, she knew not whither; a hint by which he was invited to supply their place. He felt a little queer during the day in this novel position of involuntary guardianship to so lively a young lady: but in the evening the Quaker couple duly returned, and relieved him from a dilemma which no one but a person of his peculiar sensitiveness would probably have felt more than momentarily embarrassing.

been held in the town. The object of many persons was to promote the establishment of a system of tuition under the patronage of government, which should not interfere with the religious scruples or the non-religious wishes of any sect or party: the clergy of the Church generally, as well as the Wesleyan preachers, and others, were, on the other hand, anxious to secure that, in any petition to parliament, a clause should be introduced to the effect that the reading of the Holy Scriptures, and instruction in the faith and duty of a Christian, should be made essential and integral elements in any system of education which might receive the sanction of parliament, and be paid for by the country. We mention the disputes on this question, not because Montgomery took any public part in them, but because he entertained a very decided opinion on the subject. Mr. Holland dined with him one day at Queen's Tower (the residence of Mr. Samuel Roberts), on which occasion several gentlemen were present, including partisans on both sides of the above question, which of course soon became a topic of conversation. Montgomery boldly declared that both parties were wrong: that, in his judgment, government ought not to interfere at all in the manner proposed. Instead of that, he thought parliament ought rather to be expected to make pecuniary grants to parties making out a case, and showing that they were in earnest, either by having done something themselves, or, at all events, by showing satisfactorily what ought and what could be done in each and every particular instance of claim for assistance. He objected decidedly to any plan which, in addition to the contemplated expenditure of so much money, went to create a vast system of official patronage, and at the same time to lay a sure foundation for endless electioneering and other local squabbles through some

twelve thousand parishes. His opinions remained unchanged; when, presently afterwards, Lord Brougham introduced into the House of Lords a bill for the Establishment of a General System of National Education.

Little, comparatively, as was the interest which at this period Montgomery took in general politics, there was one question introduced into the House of Commons by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, to the aspect and progress of which he could hardly be expected to feel indifferent: we allude to the proposed revision of the pension list. He had also, we believe, received, and explicitly replied to, a communication from Mr. Spring Rice on this subject. There was, however, apparently little if any probability that the annuities which were paid to persons of eminence in science and literature—few in number, and small in amount certainly—would be interfered with at that time.\* Montgomery would therefore sometimes jocularly advert to the privations to which he would have to submit, “if the Radicals knocked off his allowance.” The consequences of such an act, had it taken place, would have been seriously felt by the poet. Indeed, pending the possibility of such an event, and as a provision for old age, he entertained

\* Immediately before the discussion of the subject in parliament, the “Spectator” newspaper published an elaborate article on “the pension system,” containing the names, the amount of annuity, and other particulars of the beneficiaries. Montgomery’s name occurs more than once in the notes; and on having the paper shown to him, he was not a little amused by the waggery of the editor. For example:—“*Montgomery, James, the Poet.*—Neither his ‘Wanderer of Switzerland’ nor his ‘World before the Flood’ have secured for him so large a pension as *Alfred Montgomery*, who stands just above him—a name to fame unknown.” His name was introduced two or three times more in odd juxtaposition with others.



serious thoughts of sinking the bulk of his available property to secure an annuity. From that course the writer of this notice felt inclined, on several accounts, strongly to dissuade him; and he afterwards came to a similar conclusion himself, remarking pleasantly to his friend, that he had resolved to become his own insurer, by drawing upon the principal, should the interest or other current income from his property ever become insufficient to meet his expenses.

In a letter addressed to his friend the Rev. Robert Wood, early in this year, explaining his inability to visit Manchester during the ensuing summer, he said:—“Towards June I can no more look forward and see what may be my way of life then, than I can, at this season, discover the stars below the horizon which will then be the followers of the sun in the midnight firmament. I know by the almanack what they will be, but I cannot know from the unwritten book of the future what they will bring to me.” However, on the 19th of December, he answered a pressing letter of the same correspondent with a conditional promise. After a doleful allusion to the “incommunicable anxieties, troubles, and inconveniences arising out of the mysterious malady” of the elder Miss Gales, he says:—“If it please the Lord, in his providence and his grace, to allow me to comply with the request of your Christian friends and mine, at Manchester, I shall be happy to be among them at their missionary anniversary on the 14th of February. . . . For myself, though ‘careful and troubled about many things,’ as usual, I yet strive to steal away from this poor world’s business, even in the performance of lawful occupations and sacred duties, to sit with Mary at the Master’s feet; my constant prayer being to have the mind and the power to ‘choose the better part,’ and to attend to the ‘one thing needful,’ without entirely

neglecting the many things that are necessary. A happy Christmas and a good new year to you all, and many an old, and many a new one to come, each more delightful than the past, and more exhilarating in the prospect of that which shall be the last and the best in time — the first of the years of eternity ! ”

Both the poet and his correspondent have now entered upon that endless cycle of invisible and beatific existence so piously anticipated in the wish and the prayer of the foregoing quotation.

## CHAP. LXXIX.

1838.

DEATH AND FUNERAL OF MISS GALES. — VERSES TO HER MEMORY. —  
 LETTER TO GEORGE BENNET. — TO REV. ROBERT WOOD. — LIFE OF  
 SCOTT. — VISIT TO HULL. — LETTER TO GEORGE BENNET. — TO MISS  
 MELLIN. — TO WILLIAM SISSONS. — TO GEORGE BENNET. — TO MRS.  
 FOSTER AND MRS. LUCK.

THE painful and trying domestic scene amidst which Montgomery had been for many months living, was drawing towards a close, but not under brightening conditions. At Christmas, Miss Gales was so ill that he could not be prevailed upon to be present at any of those social religious meetings which he had in past years been in the habit of attending at this season : indeed, for several days at the commencement of the new year the death of the invalid was almost hourly expected. At such a crisis, therefore, the poet, as may be inferred from expressions in some of the letters which we have given, suffered through the intensity of his feelings to a degree of which sterner natures are altogether unsusceptible. Unconscious as was the object of his solicitude of his affectionate attentions, these were, nevertheless, unremitted ; and while he watched, wept over, and prayed for his dying friend, it added not a little to the poignancy of his grief that she appeared alike insensible to those divine consolations which the word of God furnishes, and to the expressions of human sym-

pathy, her mind being, according to his expression, "as inaccessible as a star." Mr. Holland saw the afflicted poet almost every day; and seldom did it happen during these interviews that his eyes were unsuffused with tears, arising from the emotion with which he adverted to the sick chamber at home. "We have lived together," he would say, "more than forty years, and never in all that time did I receive from her one unkind word, though I cannot say that she has not received many from me. We have sometimes differed in opinion; but she was oftener right than I was." And then, with that hope which is so frequently the beautiful offspring of caution or affection in such cases, he would speak of her religious state. "She was never talkative on the subject of Christian experience; but as her mind, although never what would be called strong, was remarkably unsophisticated and pure, I verily believe she received with childlike simplicity, and cherished with prayerful sincerity, the saving truths of the gospel. I have often been struck with the judicious remarks which she made on the meaning and bearing of the sermon, on returning from church, and with the devotional expression of her feelings at our family worship. I am disposed to judge of her state, as of my own, from the Bible alone; for were I to estimate the reality of my own religious experience by the standard to which others have attained, or even by some of the technical rules they have laid down, I should sink into despair. I feel my place of safety, therefore, to be that to which I do know I am permitted to come—the foot of the cross."

Mr. Holland not having seen Montgomery on the 17th of January, as he had expected, the day following brought this touching note:—

*James Montgomery to John Holland.*

“The Mount, Jan. 18. 1838.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,

“We are one less at The Mount. We are, however, not as those who sorrow without hope. I must not trust my heart to my hand, or I know not whither it might be carried at this time. Sarah [Gales] is pretty well; but — as it could not, it ought not to be otherwise—deeply distressed. Dear Anne [Gales] departed yesterday morning soon after four o’clock. With her yet in body amongst us we seem to be living between the two worlds, in each of which she has now a portion. Ours is yet in this; but all that we have to do, including the fulfilment of every duty to God and our neighbour, under every change of circumstances, is to prepare for our departure,—that when called at any moment, we may arise and go hence, for this is not our rest; but there remaineth a rest for the people of God. Among these may we — you — all, all we love, be found here, and then, there and for ever, we shall be with the Lord.

“So prays your sincere friend,

“J. MONTGOMERY.\*

“Mr. J. Holland.”

The funeral of Miss Gales, which was as unostentatious as possible, took place on the Monday following her death. On that day, when the thermometer was below zero, and the ground was covered by a snow-storm which lasted eight weeks, the inhabitants of Eckington (the village often before mentioned) wit-

\* The following obituary, which was inserted in the Sheffield newspapers, lies before us, in the handwriting of Montgomery:—  
“Died, at The Mount, near this town, on Wednesday, aged 68 years, [on the coffin-plate it was 70], Miss Gales, eldest daughter of the late Mr. Thomas Gales, of Eckington, Derbyshire, and sister of Mr. Joseph Gales, formerly of Sheffield, but now of the city of Washington, U.S. She was of a meek and quiet spirit, and walked humbly with her God. After a long indisposition her end was peace.”

nessed the coffin of the deceased borne to her grave in their churchyard by five of the six individuals who, seven years before, and at the same spot, had performed a similar duty to the corpse of her younger sister; while the only formal but not the only real mourners on the present occasion were, Miss Sarah Gales, now without any near relative in Europe, and Mr. Montgomery, her only friend and protector.

*“In Memory of my dear Friend Anne Gales.*

- “She went as calmly as at eve  
A cloud in sunset melts away,  
While blending lights and shadows weave  
The winding-sheet of dying day.
- “No ; — the day dies not ; round the globe  
It holds its flight o’er land and main ;  
Morn, noon, and evening are its robe,  
And solemn night its flowing train.
- “So when to us she seemed to die,  
And left a shadow in her shroud,  
’Twas but the glory passing by,  
And darkness gathering round a cloud.
- “We gazed upon the earthly prison  
From which the enfranchised soul had fled ;—  
‘She is not here, for she is risen ;  
Seek not the living with the dead.’
- “Such words as angel lips conveyed,  
To Mary at the sepulchre  
Where she had seen her Saviour laid,  
Seemed for a moment true of her.
- , ‘For she had risen, and cast away  
The vestments which her spirit wore,  
‘The linen clothes and napkin’ lay,  
But she, but she, was there no more.



“ Yes, she was risen ; and whither flown,  
The mind of man might not conceive ;  
Yet that she stood before the throne,  
Faith, though it saw not, could believe.

“ For, by no sophistry beguiled,  
She loved the gospel’s joyful sound,  
Received it as a little child,  
And in her heart its sweetness found.

“ Farewell, a brief farewell, dear friend !  
Dear sister, we are following fast :  
O for endurance to the end,  
And home in heaven when toils are past !

“ Ashes to ashes, dust to dust,  
We laid thee where thy fathers sleep ;  
There, till the rising of the just,  
Watch o’er thy bed the stars shall keep.

“ ‘ Good night ! ’ once more ; — when next we meet,  
May this our salutation be,  
‘ Good morrow ! ’ at the judgment seat,  
‘ Good morrow ! ’ to eternity.

“ J. M.

“ The Mount, Feb. 24. 1838.”

We have dwelt perhaps longer on the circumstances attending the death of this worthy but unpretending woman than, in the opinion of some persons, may appear justifiable. But, in addition to the fact that both the biographers had received from her innumerable civilities through a series of years, which alone might justify *their* passing tribute of respect to her memory, it would have been worse than ungrateful in them to have suffered the woman to whose domestic care, affectionate sympathy, and undeviating solicitude Montgomery was so largely indebted during forty-five

years, for nearly all the social comfort an unmarried man can enjoy, to go down to her grave with less than this brief record of her worth.

*James Montgomery to George Bennet.*

“The Mount, Jan. 23. 1838.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,

“Yesterday I followed to her last home all that was left of my beloved companion, my sister in soul though alien by blood, when her spirit returned to God who gave it, and broke the threefold cord that had bound herself, her sister, and me in domestic affection for more than five-and-forty years. We laid her to rest in the churchyard of Eckington, her native village, where her kindred of three generations have been progressively gathered to their unrecorded fathers, who lived before them in the same neighbourhood. . . . She rests in peace, I humbly trust, in the presence of her Redeemer. For years past her simple ingenuous piety and sincere devotion, according to the knowledge of divine things which she had received, and which she embraced, I verily believe, according to the convictions wrought by the Spirit of God upon her heart and mind, — these have been to me a source of hope for her through life, and are still the ground of faith in the power of the gospel as the power of God to her, that she is now one of the redeemed before the throne. This one subject, which has in other respects been predominant in my thoughts while the process of mortality was going forward and under my very eyes for the last month, has occupied all my paper; and less I found not means to say, though I seem to have said so little, that you will very imperfectly comprehend through what a course of sorrows and consolations, wonderfully and blessedly mingled in the same cup, her dear sister and I have been lately led. All, all I must conclude is well, because I cannot find a Scripture that will — understood in its plainest meaning — allow me to doubt that she is as far beyond suffering and death as pure spirit can be in heaven. Sarah joins me in

kindest regards, and good wishes for your health and happiness through many new years to come — if it be the Lord's will ; and if not, for something better still — soul-health and happiness to all eternity.

“ Your sincere friend,

“ J. MONTGOMERY.

“ George Bennet, Esq., Grove Place, Hackney.”

While confined to the house by the death of Miss Gales, Montgomery received through the Post Office the sum of 10*l.* from Henry Wilson, Esq., for disposal in such charitable objects as he might think fit. In acknowledging the donation, he mentioned to his generous friend, that as the season was trying, the weather inclement, and much suffering from want prevailed in the town, some public effort ought to be made to raise a fund to relieve the distressed. That although, circumstanced as he at that moment was, he could neither blow a trumpet nor raise a banner, yet if any others would take the lead, he would gladly march in the ranks. A public meeting was presently called, which was attended with very gratifying results; and while, to the subscription which was set on foot, Montgomery, in common with many other persons, gave 5*l.*, he also took an active part in all the proceedings connected with the actual and judicious distribution of the local bounty thus raised, amounting to between three and four thousand pounds, among his suffering townspeople.

Feb. 14. He presided at a Wesleyan Missionary Meeting in Grosvenor Street Chapel, Manchester\*, and afterwards at one in Stockport; being the guest of the Rev. Robert Wood, to whom, ten days afterwards, he wrote as follows : —

\* Watchman Newspaper, Feb. 28. 1838.

*James Montgomery to the Rev. Robert Wood.*

"The Mount, Sheffield, Feb. 24. 1838.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"The first sentence of this unexpected, but I hope not wholly unwelcome letter, must be the expression of my heart's thanks felt all the while I was with you and ever since, for the wonted kindness which, not for the first nor the fifth time, I experienced from you and your family on my late visit in the neighbourhood of Manchester; for though you strike and pitch your tent from place to place almost as often as Abraham did, in a land where you have no abiding habitation, yet wherever you sojourn you contrive to make me a home, and by the gentle compulsion of Christian friendship constrain me to tarry occasionally under your roof, that I may not only see that the Lord hath spoken good concerning you, but also be a partaker at such times of the blessedness which He bestows upon those who everywhere build an altar to Him on the spot of their temporary rest, and command their households after them to fear, and serve, and love his name. You all saw and sympathised with me in my peculiarly trying circumstances while I was flitting to and fro during that restless interval. . . .

"Since I was with you I have obtained a little further information respecting the author of the tract on the Holy Scriptures \*, which I left with you, and which you took the trouble to recommend to the editor of your Tract Society. If these gentlemen adopt and reprint it, I should be glad if they could in the prefatory remarks (p. 1.), instead of the words 'Of him nothing further can be communicated here,' say, 'He was a minister of the gospel at Hungerford, Berkshire, and bore the character of being a grave, serious, zealous preacher; of a solid understanding, peaceable spirit, and blameless life.' Then proceed, beginning *a new sentence*,

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\* In verse, and afterwards printed under the title of the "Great Word."

with the context : ‘ After the present revival from the oblivion of nearly two centuries, &c. &c.’

“ This alteration need not be made unless it is quite convenient. More might be said of him, but I am afraid of prejudicing our friends of the Establishment, if it were to be added that his father, his brother, and himself were all three among those lights of the Church which were put out of *it*, but *not* out of the Church universal, in the dark days of Charles II., for nonconformity.

“ I have to exercise your patience, and cast myself upon your mercy, on another subject, the mention of which will give you another glimpse into the hypochondriacal affection of my spirits at this time, because the thought of it has plagued me like a mote in the eye, that, turn the too sensitive organ which way you will, touches it to the quick. I was introduced in your family to Mr. Green, the portrait-painter, and, from the best feelings towards myself, I was sounded as to whether I was willing to allow him to exercise his skill in attempting to copy my features, of which so many pictorial transcripts have been made, that, whether it be from pride or humility, I am ashamed to look myself in the face in any one of them. Be this as it may, I am utterly unprepared at present to submit to any experiment of the kind, the circumstances of which would disturb my temper beyond the mere irksomeness of sitting to the artist. Had I been staying in Manchester long enough to have allowed your friend to do justice to himself in the execution of such a task, I believe I might have felt that I owed it to your kindness to make that small sacrifice to gratify a wish so benevolently cherished on your part, particularly as those who are dearest to you seemed interested in the matter. But I am sure you will not take it ill if I confess my weakness so far as to say that if the painter were to come hither for that purpose, the thought in anticipation would make me miserable, and I should find it more painful than you would require to yield even to your wishes in that case. . . . The idea, therefore, if you please must rest, and sometime perhaps you may have all you could desire of me

in that shape. My best and kindest regards to Mrs. Wood and the young people.

“I am, very truly, your much obliged friend,  
“J. MONTGOMERY.”

Miss Mellin, a kind friend of the poet, and a zealous advocate of the Moravian missions, residing at Hull, had arranged for a public meeting on their behalf in that town. In a long letter to this lady, dated Feb. 22nd, he says, —

“In the dreary interval [between the death of Miss Gales and his Lancashire visit] I was troubled with a complaint in the mouth, which threatened to silence me from open speaking in public: a set of mutinous teeth, which had been bound over by a skilful dentist to keep the peace, broke their recognisances, and subjected me for three weeks to no small misery. At much inconvenience, however, I was enabled to fulfil the engagements above mentioned, last week, and since my return home I have had to undergo a further process of reform in that quarter; but the thoughts find their way from one head into another, in ‘the shape of the sound of words.’ I hope, therefore, in the course of a few days to have recovered the use of the organs of speech so far as to promise to compensate, if possible, any disappointment which the Christian friends of the Brethren’s missions may have felt by my failure of appearance among them on their first invitation, and when, indeed, I shall be very thankful to avail myself of your kind offer of hospitality.”

The promised visit took place about the middle of March, at which time also overtures were made to him for the delivery, at some future opportunity, of his lectures on the British Poets before the members of the Hull•Philosophical Society.

March 8. He was reading the sixth volume of the “Life of Scott.” “It really,” said he, “makes one



almost unwilling to die, when one sees how the very secret thoughts of an individual, if he happened to leave any private record of them, are exposed to public gaze and scrutiny after the writer's death. I believe I never wrote a line of a *diary* in my life. Scott, to and through his heart's core, was, with all his genius, a thoroughly worldly-minded man: he does, indeed, sometimes mention the Bible with respect in a general way; but there can be no doubt that he hated what we are accustomed to call — and very properly call — *evangelical religion*. He has some flippant, not to say irreverent remarks, on the opinion that good people make the bliss of heaven to consist chiefly in singing; an employment which, it seems, would not be welcome to *him*. The fact is," said Montgomery, "holy men, even the simplest of them, are very rarely guilty of excess in the notion thus attributed to them: indeed, why *should* they? since nearly all that the Scriptures authorise us to conclude of the state and place of the happy departed, comes within the meaning of four words — light, music, society, and, especially, rest; and these, in some of their modifications, will be found to constitute nearly the entire subject of the 'Paradiso' of Dante."

*James Montgomery to George Bennet.*

"The Mount, Sheffield, March 17. 1838.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

". . . I have once more to acknowledge the fresh obligation which you offer to lay upon me, and to none living am I more willing to be under an obligation than to yourself; but without assigning one of the ninety-nine reasons which cut off the probability, not to say possibility, of visiting Hackney *this* year (and in the whole calendar of time there is no year *but* this, since the past have been, and the future

are not), I can only accept the invitation in my heart, and hope to enjoy the pleasure of it in the spirit, should I be spared to see the swallows and hear the cuckoo again. I am under an engagement to visit Bristol for a few days in May on a missionary anniversary, and again in October, for a fortnight, to deliver my lectures there on the 'British Poets.' My spirits have been and continue too much depressed by personal troubles, as well as by late domestic afflictions, to allow me to look beyond the morrow (with the exceptions afore-mentioned); and daily mercies alone enable me to go softly on my way of life, as one with whom the end of all things is at hand, and who has need to be sober and watchful unto prayer, lest, after all the long-suffering and loving-kindness of God my Saviour towards me, I be at last a castaway. At Hull several friends (especially Mr. James Bowden and his family connections) inquired very kindly after you. I am obliged by your extract from Lesche's 'Polar Discoveries,' because it shows how kindly attentive you are to my credit as an author. I have not seen the publication, but I am sufficiently acquainted both with the northern histories and traditions respecting East Greenland to know that it is difficult to distinguish fact from fable in them, and to make both bend to my purpose as a rhymers. Cottle's 'Recollections of Coleridge' I read with peculiar interest, having had personal acquaintance with the biographer, and no ordinary feeling of curiosity to learn more of the actual character of the most mysterious of the master spirits of our age, as influencing its literature. Lockhart's 'Memoirs of Walter Scott' at present absorb my whole soul in reading them volume by volume. His history is more intensely attractive to my mind, and in itself even more marvellous, than any of his fictions either in verse or prose.

"I am truly your friend,

" J. MONTGOMERY.

"George Bennet, Esq., Grove Place, Hackney."

*James Montgomery to Miss Mellin.*

“ The Mount, Sheffield, March 21. 1838.

“ DEAR FRIEND,

“ It will be a week to-morrow since I reached home in safety after all the terrors and perils — turning, as I approached them, into comforts and enjoyments — of my expedition to Hull. . . . But why should I trouble you with my troubles — *mine* literally, because I make them for myself; though I would not make *one* for an enemy, and surely not for a friend such as you have proved yourself to be on the late occasion . . . when you brought me into acquaintance with some of the excellent of the earth, whom I should be happy to meet again either below or above the sun. To these, as well as to those few of whom I had formerly some knowledge, and esteemed in proportion, especially Mr. Dykes, Mr. Knight, and my oldest acquaintance the Bowdens, be pleased to present my best remembrances, and grateful acknowledgments also of their services in behalf of the cause which brought me to Hull: for yours in that cause there is but One who can reward you, and will abundantly in your own bosom. . . . When you write to your cousin, pray tell her *not* that I was delighted with her, — though I may tell you so, — but that I shall ever remember her with kindness, not only for the kindness which she showed me, though that was exceedingly acceptable, but also for the manifestation, in her frank and unsophisticated conduct and conversation, of those gifts and graces which I trust will cause her to grow in the best knowledge, as well as in favour with God and man. Tell her, however, not to love poetry *too* much, but yet to love it so far as it is innocent or sanctified. She has a very delicate sensibility of its purest qualities; and I confess, in reading to her Andrew Marvell’s hard and quaint but admirable verse, I was surprised at the quickness with which she apprehended his frequently subtle, and sometimes obscure allusions, clad in old-fashioned but exquisite

phraseology. . . . I have written a few verses on the other leaf for Miss Bodley.

“Believe me, very gratefully your friend,

“J. MONTGOMERY.

“Miss Mellin, Story Street, Hull.”

A proposal having been made to Montgomery from members of the Sheffield Sunday School Union, in the formation and success of which he had been so largely instrumental, to favour the whole body of teachers with his presence at a special social meeting, he replied as follows:—

*James Montgomery to William Sissons.*

“The Mount, April 20. 1838.

“DEAR SIR,

“I have been so unwell, and so much engaged with other concerns since I received your note, that till yesterday I did not find spirit to attempt a hymn for the Sunday School Union. Such as it is—the produce of depressed thought with excited feeling and exhausted strength—I now send it to you for acceptance or rejection, as the committee determine.

‘Hail! all hail, the King of kings, &c.’\*

While I acknowledge with much gratitude the kind purpose of my Christian associates in the Sunday School Union, I must implore them to change it into something in every way more fit and expedient. If they have resolved upon a social meeting as proposed, let it take place when the founder and patron of the Institution—Mr. George Bennet—is in Sheffield; he is expected in the course of the summer. The honour is due to him; and I shall be happy, as one, to hail him on such an occasion. With best respects to the secretaries and committee,

“I am truly your friend,

“J. MONTGOMERY.

“Mr. W. Sissons.”

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\* Original Hymns.

*James Montgomery to George Bennet.*

“The Mount, near Sheffield, April 27. 1838.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,

“I snatch a hasty moment to thank you for one of the most welcome and interesting letters I ever received from you. The account of the embarkation of Mr. Williams and his missionary company had a peculiar pathos from your pen, as associated with a similar outsetting on an enterprise of mercy to the same regions in the uttermost parts of the sea seventeen years ago, in which you were the object of corresponding hopes, fears, sympathies, and prayers. That part, of course, touched me most nearly and affectingly, which alluded to your personal feelings in the reminiscence of the scene on the Thames in April 1821, awakened by the glorious and animating spectacle on a grander scale in the same month of 1838; the two being blessedly connected by a thousand golden links of intervening records of what great things the Lord has done for his Church at home and in the Pacific Isles, by action and reaction, in the progress of missionary labours for the promulgation of the gospel by British Christians among barbarian idolators on the other side of the globe. For assuredly as the zeal for spreading the knowledge of salvation abroad prompts to works of faith and labours of love among strangers and aliens from the commonwealth of grace, that commonwealth at home grows stronger and flourishes more abundantly among the faithful, whose hands and hearts are engaged in the service. I too, in a far humbler degree, but yet very delightfully at times, am living over again the corresponding weeks of last year, when in April and May I was favoured to be your guest at Hackney, and your companion to festival meetings in the great metropolis, during the high season of evangelical anniversaries. . . . I have been under the necessity of abandoning my missionary visit to Bristol in May; and it is as much as I can hope, under the most favourable circumstances, to be sufficiently recovered [from sore throat] to

redeem my lecture-pledge there in October. Meanwhile—except a visit of a few days at my brother's near Derby—I am under no obligation, and have no prospect of leaving home during the summer — should summer ever come, for here is spring, and *such* a spring as might have been twin-sister to that which we had at Hackney last year, with its blighting east winds.

“I am truly, your affectionate friend, ”

“J. MONTGOMERY.

“George Bennet, Esq., Grove Place, Hackney.”

The visit to Ockbrook, alluded to at the close of the preceding letter, afforded a grateful relief to the over-charged feelings of the poet, though it was but a change from the death-scene of a faithful friend, to the sick chamber of a suffering brother.\* But the season was May, and he enjoyed many delightful rambles, meditating upon what he had seen of the gentle sex under circumstances of trial, and casting his sentiments into the commencement of a poem, which was never finished, under the title of “Woman's Lot.”†

\* “I have been passing through deep waters of late, and am yet in the streams of domestic affliction; one who has been my friend and as a sister to me for five-and-forty years, has been removed, I trust to a better place and better society, but has left my home very desolate. Her surviving sister remains with me, and we are growing old together; all their relatives being removed, or departed this life. But God is our refuge, and we find Him a very present help in the time of need.”

† Appendix B. The subject here indicated seems to have attracted his attention at an early period, and we have had previous glimpses of its influence; indeed, as early as 1813 his lively friend Mrs. Hofland closed a long letter to him with this remark:—“I hope you will now get forward with writing ‘Woman’; you have read her in a fair book, and seen her in every colour: alas! you have been deceived in your hopes of her in more ways than one; you have seen her in one place, irresolute to weakness; in another, firm to obstinacy—and erring in both.”



*James Montgomery to his Nieces, Mrs. Eliz. C. Foster, and Mrs. Harriet Luck.*

“The Mount, near Sheffield, May 31. 1838.

“MY DEAR BETSY AND HARRIET,

“Having called you, as above, by your proper style and dignity, I am glad to address you by your old familiar names from infancy, when we became acquainted in the days of Charlton Fair\*, and when you—though I was frightened at the thoughts of children (not understanding such things)—made your bachelor uncle love you dearly before he had been half an hour under the influence of your tattle and your winning ways, so that I have loved children ever since for your sakes as well as for their own, taking it for granted that all little girls are Betsys and Harriets. Now then, my dear Betsy and Harriet—the names run in my memory, over my tongue-end, and down to the tip of my fingers, even through the pen upon this paper, you see,—I do commend to your kindness my good friend, Mr. John Holland (Betsy is not quite a stranger to him), concerning whom I have written to your father this day. I request that as he is a very tame and gentle creature, who will neither snarl nor bite, but be very thankful for a sweet look or a frank word of welcome, you will make his short visit to Woolwich pleasant, by lending him one or another of your gentlemen to show him the wonders of the place, as I have

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\* We have heard him allude to this first interview with his nieces, who were just of that age when little girls are most adventurously playful and affectionate with persons whom they really love. He felt for a few hours a little disconcerted, first by their quiet, quizzing looks, and then by their successful attempts to disturb his gravity; but presently, as he said, they both wound themselves about his heart in a way which he could scarcely have thought possible. And then at the fair, the readiness with which, to use the children's phrase, “uncle spent shillings upon us,” made him a great favourite. He said this was the only visit to a fair which he ever really enjoyed.

mentioned in the letter to your father; and also (which, you may be sure, bachelor as he is, and incorrigible I fear in that respect—the more the pity for himself), which will give him quite as much pleasure—what you can spare of your own good company at home. I am truly, your affectionate uncle,

“J. MONTGOMERY.

“Mrs. E. Foster, Woolwich. Favoured by Mr. John Holland.”

## CHAP. LXXX.

1838.

CORONATION OF QUEEN VICTORIA.—MONTGOMERY'S SPEECHES AND VERSES ON THE OCCASION.—CHILDREN'S MEETING.—LETTER TO GEORGE BENNET.—DR. SPARROW FROM U.S.—CONVERSATION.—MR. THATCHER.—MONUMENT FOR "A CHRISTIAN MERCHANT."

THE midsummer of this year was marked by an event which gave occasion to an expression of national joy probably unexampled in the modern annals of England,—at least, for a century preceding no demonstration of a similar character had been more general and hearty—we allude to the coronation of the youthful sovereign, Queen Victoria. In common with those of other principal towns, the inhabitants of Sheffield entered warmly into the subject; and processions, illuminations, dinners, suppers, balls, and *soirées* were simultaneously got up. One of the most popular of these manifestations, was a public *soirée* at the Cutlers' Hall, at which Montgomery was invited to preside, and for which he was likewise solicited to write something in the form of an ode to be sung by the company: to both proposals he readily, and to the latter with all his heart, he consented.

On the afternoon of the 28th of June, a day long to be remembered in Sheffield for the extensiveness and the harmony of its coronation festivities, about four hundred individuals of both sexes, including persons of

every shade of religious opinion \* and political sentiment, sat down to tea in the Cutlers' Hall, under the presidency of Montgomery: although unwell in consequence of inflammation of the throat, he appeared considerably animated by the scene before him. On one side of the venerable poet sat his oldest surviving female friend, Miss Gales, and on the other his youngest living female relative—a lovely niece—Harriet Montgomery, who was with him on a visit from the Moravian settlement at Ockbrook. Tea being over, the President rose and said:—

“ Friends, neighbours, fellow-subjects, fellow-Christians,—for in each of these characters, it is my privilege this day distinctly to address you,—we are assembled on ground where we may all stand in phalanx, all march abreast, all meet face to face, without either compromise or hostility, in the discreet exercise both of freedom and forbearance. I call it not common ground, for that is the debatable land on which we are daily contending for party or denominational ascendancy; nor is it neutral ground, for on that, if such a spot could be found, we should be utterly indifferent to each other and to the occasion that had brought us together. No, we are assembled upon *holy* ground—ground on which all true-hearted, right-minded Britons may hail each other as loyalists and patriots, brethren and sisters in one national family, of which our maiden Queen—she who was lately the ‘daughter of England’—by a happy transmigration has become the universal mother, the mother of millions, and worthy of all the love, honour, and obedience which dutiful children delight to yield to the dearest authority under Heaven. Nor are we assembled on an ordi-

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\* For example, among the vice-presidents were Dr. Favell, a Churchman; the Master Cutler, an Independent; Mr. Jones, a Wesleyan; Dr. Knight, a Roman Catholic; and Mr. T. A. Ward, a Unitarian.

nary occasion. This day, among all the days of our country's recorded existence, will have its peculiar mark of distinction in history; it will be crowned with the very crown which it will place upon the brow of our young Queen, and that crown, long after she shall have slept with her fathers, it will wear—wear to the end of time. But it is not the gorgeous ceremonial of this day which will render it illustrious to the eyes of generations to come—this being but the outward symbol of its invisible glory; it is the place which it will hold in our annals, forming a link between the results of all past changes and revolutions, adverse or propitious, yet ever progressive in improvement, from the landing of Cæsar to the accession of Victoria; it is the link between the results of all those and the commencement of a new series of events, whatever they may be, running onward to the end of all things. And though, with

“ ‘Jam redit et Virgo,’

we do not desire to say

“ ‘Redeunt Saturnia regna,’

we will venture to trust that

“ ‘Incipient magni procedere menses;’

that a brighter reign than the golden one of Saturn, and months mightier than those foretold by the Roman poet at the birth under Pollio's consulship, have already begun beneath the auspices of our *ASTRÆA*, the living (and long may she live!) personification of *British Justice*. No sovereign ever ascended the throne at an era more remarkable or more indicative of beneficent change in the destinies of the human race. The whole condition of man in society upon earth, however diversified in different climates and by wide-sundered degrees of barbarism or refinement, is in a state of manifest transition, whence, either for the better or the worse, a new order of things in every land, and among every people, is already so far advanced as to render retrogression to any antiquated systems impossible. It follows,

that the character of the British nation, the politics of the British Government, and the personal qualities of the British Sovereign will, in no small degree, promote or retard that progress of change which, unless wickedly counteracted, must speed onward, not too rapidly to overrun its object, the amelioration of the entire human race. Nor is it indifferent even in China and Japan, any more than throughout Australia and Polynesia, what may be the character of the inhabitants of this small island, the counsels of its statesmen, or the personal qualities of that

“ ‘Fair (Virgin) throned in the West,’

whose coronation we this day celebrate, and who, we may hope, when the right time and the right suitor shall come, will not prove so invulnerable to

“ ‘Young Cupid’s fiery shaft,’

as was that ‘Vestal’ lady, in Shakspeare’s ‘*Midsummer Night’s Dream*,’ the prototype of her only maiden predecessor. It is but a few months ago since she reached that early age at which, according to the law of the realm, a Princess may become a Queen in plenitude of power; and scarcely had she taken the graceful step from girl’s estate to womanhood, than she was called by Providence to take the magnificent one from allegiance to sovereignty. In mounting the throne of her ancestors, she has been placed at the height of mundane glory, on the pinnacle of the human race, where if the thousand millions of whom that race is composed, were represented by a pyramid graduating upward from the broad base of the multitude, rank over rank, diminishing in bulk as increasing in elevation, till the apex terminated in a single individual,—it would be our young and beautiful Victoria. There may she be seen from every point within the horizon,

“ ‘Fair as a star, when only one  
Is shining in the sky!’

There may she hold her station for many, many years of glory and of happiness to herself and her people, whose



happiness and glory it will be to uphold and partake of hers! Her tender age and her finer sex have peculiar claims upon our kindly affections as well as our glad obedience. The homage of the heart will give a chivalrous tone to the character of our loyalty, and breathe the grace of amenity over the pride of our service. And, though we doubt not that 'a thousand swords would be ready to leap out of their scabbards to avenge a look that menaced her with insult or injury,' I am not ashamed to express a wish—would that I could call it a hope!—that, during her days, the sword may repose within its sheath, and be but the unstained emblem of authority at home, and the memorial of past triumphs abroad. In one sense, and in that only, may we have a maiden reign, as we talk of a maiden assize, when no name appears on the bloody calendar of gaol delivery!

"Queens we have had before her, but never one so young: her inexperience, therefore, must be compensated by all the wisdom and knowledge in the land, and her weakness supported by all its virtue and strength. Of Mary I. nothing need be said here. Of Elizabeth, our chroniclers seem to think that they can never say too much. By the providential discomfiture of the Spanish Armada, she was enabled not only to secure her dominions on shore, but so to establish that of her country at sea, as to have rendered the soil of our island from that hour inviolable by the foot of foreign invaders. Of Mary II., consort of William III., little is recorded, except that she merged the splendour of the Queen in the calm lustre of the wife of him whom the glorious Revolution of 1688 constituted the sovereign of a free people, who 'claimed, demanded, and insisted upon' (I use their own proud language) the maintenance of their 'rights,' as the condition on which they tendered him their allegiance. Under the sceptre of Anne the military power of Britain was advanced beyond precedent since the days of Cressy and Agincourt, by the continental campaigns of Marlborough. But the great and ineffaceable glories of our two principal female reigns, were, that during them commerce and the arts of peace, literature and science, flourished

exuberantly, though the two latter were fostered rather beneath the shadow than in the sunshine of royalty. Greater than Shakspeare and Spenser, Raleigh and Bacon, under Elizabeth; or Pope and Addison, Locke and Newton, under Anne,—greater than these cannot be expected to arise in the age of Victoria; but rivals, worthy of the greatest that our country has ever produced under any sovereign, and multitudes of others, less only in comparison with the greatest, ‘the march of intellect’ will surely bring forth to swell the triumph of its train, and adorn with the imperishable trophies of genius and learning the reign of beauty and of youth, such as never before had been called so early in life to gladden with the mildness of that ‘sweet hour of prime,’ and refresh with the dews and beams of hope and promise, our beloved isle; and thence to diffuse its blessings to the utmost points of sea and land where

“ ‘East and west become the same.’

For I have not too highly exalted the station of our young Queen among the potentates of the earth. Her dominions in territorial extent are scarcely less ample than those of Russia; and if China outnumber them in population, yet taking the quality of the regions which she governs in the West and East Indies, South Africa and North America, as resources of wealth and fertility, Russia is a wilderness in comparison; while, estimating population according to its moral and intellectual standard, China is equally a desert, overcrowded with stunted minds, like pollard willows or doddered oaks, in comparison with the smallest portion of her Britannic Majesty’s subjects, those who are emphatically such,—the people of her own native land.

Should Heaven be pleased to prosper and prolong Queen Victoria’s life to a period as late as that of the youngest of her four immediate predecessors, what may not be expected from the proficiency of arts, commerce, civilisation, and that which is the glory and defence of all—Christianity, in extending, multiplying, and enhancing their respective blessings; presuming that these means of happiness may be

advanced in the same proportion, and no more, to the capital stock in hand (if I may use the phrase) of each, as they actually have been advanced during the last fifty years beyond the capital stock in hand, at the commencement of that period. But we have a right to expect yet greater things than these, considering how many awful interruptions to beneficence and national prosperity the late long wars, involving all Christendom, occasioned. In the history of our country I do not (just now) recollect a lucid interval from the mad fits of war, at home or abroad, which exceeded that, still happily continued, and likely to be, between the battle of Waterloo and the present time. From the breaking out of the French wars in 1792 to 1815, there were twenty-three years of exterminating hostilities, with but one brief breathing space. From the victory of Waterloo to the coronation of Victoria, there has been exactly the same period of rest from the horrors, the crimes, and the miseries of belligerency, uninterrupted by any access of the insane paroxysm. Have we not, then, a fair prospect of confirmed 'peace on earth, good will towards men,' accompanied by 'Glory to God in the Highest,' to the latest term at which, as we fervently hope, the crown, this day placed on the head of our young Queen, shall be exchanged for a 'Crown of Righteousness?' I know that it may be otherwise with our beloved country than I have ventured, in the spirit of prayer rather than of prophecy, to anticipate. Peace may again be broken, war again be renewed, and rage from one end of Europe to the other, affecting by its convulsions the whole accessible world of sea and land; but, upon the heads of those,—unborn, I trust, they are—unborn may they be for ever!—on their heads, who shall bring this great curse upon us, be all the penalty as will be all the guilt of re-awakening the 'spirit of the first-born Cain' to devastate the earth. This may be deemed fanaticism not only by the men who delight in war, but by those who most deprecate it, and, therefore, most dread its recurrence. But there is a possibility, which I have once before anticipated on a public occasion. Should peace be perpetuated for some

time longer, such is the march of science, such is the accession of power to man over the most tremendous elements of nature, that engines of destruction may be perfected,—and such are already in the process of invention and experiment,—as shall render a battle on land a mutual massacre, and a conflict at sea a double series of ship-explosions, so that two armies may be laid dead on the field at the first onset, and two fleets at the first exchange of broadsides cover the ocean with wrecks. On this desperate possibility, therefore, I will hang a forlorn hope that, should war revive, after half a century of suspension, the monster will expire by its own natural death,—suicide, as surely as fratricide is its natural life. Her Majesty, the first of a line of sovereigns since a maiden Queen filled the throne, has succeeded to an empire on the face of which, between the rising and setting sun, there exists not one slave among the hundred and twenty millions of her subjects; for whatever tyranny may be exercised under the name of *apprenticeship* in the West Indies, every man, woman, and child in those islands, by law as well as by equity, is free. . . . My heart's desire and prayer is that the reign of Victoria may be rendered more illustrious than that of any one of her predecessors in their day, by being a reign of mercy, a reign of peace; so that wherever the ensigns of her authority appear, they may be the pledges of her benignity, not to her subjects alone, but to all kindreds and nations with whom she is in concord."

In the course of the evening, the spirited ode — "The Sceptre in a Maiden Hand," \* was sung by the choir to the air of "Rule Britannia:" it was received with rapturous applause.

—That was not the only vehicle of verse which Montgomery prepared for the expression of joyous feeling †

\* Works, p. 359.

† In the sonnet entitled "Westminster Abbey," addressed, but probably not sent, "To the Queen," he took a more solemn review of the coronation ceremonial, "Works," p. 360.

on this auspicious day. B. Birom, Esq., the steward of Earl Fitzwilliam, having received instructions to provide an entertainment for about a thousand persons, including children, connected with the Wentworth House estate, he asked Montgomery to write a hymn to be sung on the occasion : for he thought so many people ought not to assemble together at the expense of their noble benefactor without remembering him in their enjoyment, and calling for a blessing from heaven upon the heads of himself and his family.

The good-natured bard had not the heart — we believe he had not the wish—to refuse : he therefore wrote and transmitted the following verses, which were sung with fine effect after dinner, on the day of the coronation, by a large company assembled in the spacious Riding House at Wentworth.

“ The blessings of the poor descend  
On him who is the poor man's friend ;  
On him whose acts of Christian love  
Remind them of their Friend above.

“ The poor—what blessings can be theirs?—  
Their hearts' affections and their prayers ;  
These have they given—they give them still,  
In deed and truth, with right good will.

“ But greater blessings far be shed  
On noble *Wentworth's* honoured head ;  
May ‘ God, from whom all blessings flow,’  
Fulness of grace on him bestow !

“ In health and wealth, in joy and peace,  
His comforts with his years increase ;  
And when for heaven are these resigned,  
His heirs the same *true riches* find.”

Heartily, however, as Montgomery engaged in the prescribed routine for contributing to the gratification



of the adult audience at Sheffield, and the juvenile assembly at Wentworth, his personal solicitude was more especially identified with the proposal for giving a treat, on the day following, to a number of *poor old women*, for whose entertainment no provision was otherwise made. Accordingly he wrote and circulated the following address:—

“ ‘ *Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing may be lost.*’

“So said our Saviour after he had fed five thousand men in the wilderness with five barley loaves and two small fishes, and so will all his followers do whenever they have opportunity. Tens of thousands of our townspeople will be feasted by their friends, their employers, or from their own abundance, on the coronation day of our most gracious sovereign Victoria. Let it then be indeed ‘a good day,’ ‘a day of feasting and joy, and of sending portions to one another, and gifts to the poor.’ (Esther, ix. 17—20.) Among the latter, let us not forget *the poorest of the poor*,—the old, infirm, and desolate of that sex to which our young and lovely Queen belongs; and while we ‘eat the fat and drink the sweet,’ let us ‘send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared.’ (Nehemiah, viii. 9.) The visitors of the Aged Female Society propose on the day after the coronation (Friday, the 29th instant) to invite the venerable objects of this benevolent institution to take tea with them (by favour of the master cutler) at the Cutlers’ Hall; that these—the *youngest* of whom is more than *thrice*, and the greater number *four times* the age of her Majesty—may have a day of humble feasting and as hearty gladness as the youngest and strongest of those on whom Providence has bestowed gifts more abounding. Let such then but contribute the value of the crumbs that fall from their well-spread tables on that day of universal hospitality, and their mites cast into the treasury will be sufficient to furnish ‘the widow and her who has none to help her,’ with an evening’s enter-



tainment which will be remembered with gratitude to the last evening of her long and suffering life. The funds of the charity are so limited, that less than fourpence per week is all that can be afforded, on the average, to each of its poor objects. It cannot, however, be doubted, that the compassionate liberality of its well-wishers will enable the ladies of the committee *to make three hundred old hearts happy*, at a season when millions of all ages and conditions throughout the British Empire will be rejoicing together."

This appeal was responded to by donations of about twenty pounds in money, and one contribution in "stuff" of a nature almost to puzzle even the ingenuity of our friend himself as to what to do with it. The owner of one of the most dashing "gin palaces" in the town, having seen the appeal alluded to, immediately transmitted to Montgomery a bouncing two-gallon bottle of "Jamaica rum!" with a request that the old women might be allowed to have in their concluding cup of tea a sup of real "West Indian cream." Mr. Holland happened to dine with Montgomery, the Rev. J. Earnshaw of Cambridge, and some other persons at the Queen's Tower, in Sheffield Park, the day after the reception of the present, and he was not a little amused at the grave conference between the worthy host and the poet, as to the disposal of the portentous bottle. It was finally settled that the donor of the rum\* should be requested to exchange it for wine of

\* When Montgomery waited upon the spirit merchant to negotiate the exchange of the liquor mentioned above, a sudden association of thoughts, caused by the likeness of that individual to his father, quite overcame the poet, who literally burst into tears. He afterwards wrote a note:—

"SIR,

"I have to apologise for the confused manner in which I acknowledged your present, during our brief interview the other day. The fact is, the moment I saw your face, I was so forcibly

the same value, Mr. Roberts engaging to supply as much more as would be necessary to allow the old women to have a glass each. The affair was ultimately arranged in this way; and the writer of this page had the gratification, on the 29th of June, to join Montgomery and several other friends at the Cutlers' Hall, in pledging in the wine so obtained, and in concert with upwards of 300 old women, the "Health of Queen Victoria."

*James Montgomery to George Bennet.*

[Postmark, July 13. 1838.]

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"I take a sheet half printed\*, that I may confine myself within due limits of congratulation on your return to good old England, after the perils and pleasures of your late journey. . . . I cannot pretend to run on into the details of our late 'goings on' at Sheffield on occasion of the Queen's coronation. Among the myriads of feastings throughout the land, I doubt whether there was one at which more genuine and hearty delight was experienced than at the tea-drinking which we gave to our 'Old Women;' it would have made you young again, as it did me, to see how happy and how thankful they were for that *small* benefit. 'We've all been queens to-day!' said one poor soul, in the joy of her heart. How precious are the daily gifts of Providence when the crumbs that fall from such tables as are spread for you and

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reminded of that of your late worthy father, from whom I have in past years received many donations for the Moravian Missions, that I could not restrain my feelings. I thank you most heartily, on behalf of the aged females, for your present; and pray God to bless you.

"I am, &c.,

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"Mr. T. Wiley."

\* The other side contained the coronation stanzas.

me, can furnish a 'feast of fat things' to so many (we had three hundred, I believe, present) *worthier* fellow-creatures than we dare presume to think ourselves to be, when we think as we ought, and remember who it is that hath made us to differ from the poorest among them! Your letter, announcing your sudden purpose of visiting Russia, arrived too late to be acknowledged before you proposed to sail; and therefore, to be even with you, — that is, for once in my life to be before you, — I immediately wrote an epistle hortatory and gratulatory (if I remember right), to meet you *poste restante* at St. Petersburg, — there I presume it lies in the dead-letter box. . . . We often talk about you and your Russian expedition, which though as great a miscarriage as Bonaparte's, has not been quite so unfortunate a one; but I confess I cannot flatter you with the hope that, *for the world*, it will be a miscarriage so extensively and permanently fortunate as his, in the issue, has proved to be. And you will agree yourself with my exultation of the latter, when you (peace man that you are) recollect that Bonaparte's disastrous flight from Moscow was the first decisive march towards the utter and everlasting abandonment of war, which even I begin faintly to anticipate, as I have earnestly desired, to be not hopelessly far off.

"I am truly your friend,

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"George Bennet, Esq., Hackney."

July 18. Mr. Holland spent an evening at The Mount, with the Rev. Dr. Sparrow, Vice-President of Kenyon College, U. S., who brought a letter of introduction to Montgomery from the Rev. Dr. Milnor of New York. This was one of the many instances of literary or clerical gentlemen from America deviating considerably from their otherwise direct route through this country, in order to pay their respects to the Sheffield poet. The reverend visitor had come to England to repair, by a temporary remission of duty and change of sce-

nery, a constitution shattered by unwearied ministerial labours, as an episcopal clergyman, amidst a widely-spread population in the Western wilderness. Among other things, he was anxious to obtain some account of the moral state of the population of Sheffield. *Dr. Sparrow*: “Do you consider the condition of the inhabitants of this town, with respect to morals, as elevated or otherwise?” *Montgomery*: “The state of the town, although such as to afford cause for abundant regret when the means of instruction and means of grace are considered, is nevertheless, in my opinion, rather better, certainly not worse, than other equally large towns.” *Holland*: “Such is undoubtedly the fact; and two or three important causes obviously conduce to bring it about. In the first place, there are in Sheffield at least as many schools of every description as are to be found in most other large towns: in the second place, owing to the nature of the local handicrafts generally, the influx of strangers is at all times, and under any circumstances, relatively inconsiderable: and lastly, the resident clergy, of all classes, are among the most laborious, exemplary, and influential of their body.” This sentiment was corroborated by *Montgomery*, who remarked that a very decided change for the better had taken place during his residence in the town. Not only were the tastes of the poor evidently improved as well as their habits and appearance, but profane swearing especially, which used to be lamentably common, and was not confined to the lower classes, was now rarely heard—at all events, not by him. *Dr. Sparrow*: “Are females much employed in the manufactories? I have this afternoon been shown through an extensive establishment, in which articles plated with silver are made; and although I saw a woman in the warehouse, I did not notice any in the workshops.”

*Montgomery*: "It is nevertheless chiefly in those establishments that they are employed in burnishing and otherwise getting up the wares. But they are accommodated usually in rooms apart from the men; and as the masters of these works are themselves among the most respectable members of the manufacturing community, a corresponding attention is paid to the securing of at least general decency and order among their workpeople of both sexes. Good wages, which are so commonly obtained by the persons in these workshops, and indeed to a considerable extent in others, naturally lead to early marriages: yet, even in these cases, except from obvious imprudence in other respects, and the intervention of occasional seasons when work is more than usually scarce, the families thus originating live comfortably." *Dr. Sparrow*: "I noticed that the workmen at the large cutlery establishment of the Messrs. Rodgers, and at the steel-works of the Brothers Sanderson, which I have visited to-day, appeared to be cheerful and, so far as I could judge, well off; while the smallest houses in your streets have an air of cleanliness and comfort about them."

*Holland*: "In this respect, at least, Sheffield presents a peculiarity well worth notice—I may say imitation. Almost every family lives in a separate house, however small that house may be; hence *tenemented* buildings, generally alike unfavourable to convenience, cleanliness, and independence, are almost unknown here. I believe there will not be found, in a population of upwards of 100,000 souls, a single decent and industrious family residing in a cellar, nor scarcely one in a garret—a circumstance directly favourable, as must be at once evident, to the health and comfort, and indirectly advantageous to the morals, of the labouring population. How different is this state of things from



the domestic condition of thousands in Liverpool, Manchester, and elsewhere!" *Dr. Sparrow*: "That is really an interesting fact, and one which I should not have anticipated. There is a striking difference between the residences of the poor in England and in Ireland, especially with regard to cleanliness; and yet I thought I noticed an improvement even in the latter country, as compared with what I recollect of it when I was for some years resident there while a boy: for instance, I was struck with the number of persons who had their shoes blacked, in a class who would not formerly, I suspect, have paid any attention to such matters. There seems also to be more whitewashing of their cabins inside, than was the case, as I remember, some thirty years ago. I often regret an apparent want of attention to cleanliness manifest in the dwellings of industrious settlers in our backwoods, for which, however, many apologies might be made." *Montgomery*: "The Irish ought to improve if increase in their exports be any evidence of improvement: indeed, they must surely be better off, by the money returns necessarily made upon the large herds of pigs which are every week driven along the road here to the Sheffield and Rotherham markets." In the course of the evening, amidst a variety of other topics incidentally taken up, Dr. Sparrow asked Montgomery's opinion of several of the leading modern poets. *Montgomery*: "Wordsworth is rising in the estimation of the public, as he deserves to do: as a proof of this, a spirited publisher has recently given him a thousand guineas to be allowed to print an edition of his poems. Readers of taste and feeling are beginning to appreciate the merits of his rich and original compositions." *Dr. Sparrow*: "And yet, in my humble opinion, many, and I think the best of them, are written in neglect, or even in



defiance of his propounded theories." *Montgomery*: "To be sure they are; and they are all the better for that. The 'Excursion,' especially, the more it is read the better it will be understood, and the more it must be relished by any one who can enter fully into the deep and original conceptions of the author." *Dr. Sparrow*: "I regret that I have never been able to enjoy in any such elevated degree the poetry of Wordsworth, particularly his more elaborate compositions. The 'Idiot Boy' is my favourite." *Holland*: "Which is, at least, written in conformity with the notable theory of the poet: indeed, it is, as you will recollect, the very poem selected by Lord Byron to give point to his sneer at Wordsworth in 'English Bards and Scotch Reviewers.' There are, however, in addition to the obvious interest of the story, many passages which will have a peculiar force of meaning in a newly settled country. It must frequently occur to families in the State of Ohio, for instance, when any accident or unexpected necessity presents itself,—

" 'There's not a house within a mile ;  
No hand to help them in distress :'

and this not seldom, because, literally,

" 'Betty's husband's at the wood,  
Where by the week he doth abide.'

And not only must 'Johnny' frequently have to traverse the forest, long and lone, where 'owlets hoot, on purpose

" 'To bring a doctor from the town ;'

but the parson himself must sometimes be far away, when he is particularly wanted." *Dr. Sparrow* said

this was often the case, and he exemplified the assertion by some striking incidents with which, as a clergyman, he had been concerned. *Montgomery*: "Whatever Lord Byron may have said, he, in common with every poet of his day, was greatly indebted to Wordsworth—not that he has imitated him, but his words show how closely he has studied him. To enjoy Wordsworth fully you must enter largely and heartily into his meaning, and he always *has* a meaning, and one which is worth seeking, and finding too. It is not 'shallow draughts' of him that will suffice; you must 'drink deep' into his spirit, as well as become familiar with his style, and you will be sure to be repaid." In reply to a question relative to the difference between the poetry of Coleridge and Wordsworth, *Montgomery* said:—"It is like the difference between electricity and galvanism—the former flashing at rapid intervals with the utmost intensity of effect; the other not less powerful, but rather continuous than sudden in its wonderful influence."

Southey was mentioned. *Montgomery*: "Southey is not only a delightful poet, but the best English prose writer we have; at least, in his line of subjects; and these have been so numerous and miscellaneous, that he is probably, next to Scott, the most voluminous—certainly the most diversified—author of his day." A variety of other topics, chiefly of a religious bearing, were discussed till it grew late; *Montgomery* then laid the Bible before Dr. Sparrow, who read a chapter, and closed, with prayer, an evening which all parties, we believe, considered had been very delightfully spent.

A few days afterward, another gentleman\*, from the

\* Mr. Thatcher, whose "Indian Biography" was not unknown in England. As Willis's "Pencillings by the Way" had been popular, his countryman wrote a series of sketches in a somewhat

United States, called at The Mount on his way from Irvine and Gracehill, to which places he had made a pilgrimage, out of respect for the poet, of whom he was anxious to possess some memorial. Montgomery gave him the original MS. of the "Ocean," written at Scarborough in 1805.

The poet, at the solicitation of a number of gentlemen whom he joined in placing a monument over the grave of Mr. William Parker, a highly-esteemed merchant and benevolent man, in the cemetery at Sheffield, wrote the following lines, which are engraved on the stone:—

"To kindred, friends, and townsmen dear,  
A Christian Merchant slumbers here,  
Who found, while goodly pearls he sought,  
One pearl of price surpassing thought.  
Reader, do likewise; he who finds and buys  
That pearl, though he sell all he hath, is wise."

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similar style from Ireland, which were published in a Boston news paper.

## CHAP. LXXXI.

1838.

WALK TO BEAUCHIEF ABBEY. — LOVE OF FLOWERS. — LETTER TO THE  
“FAR WEST.” — LETTER TO REV. GEORGE MARSDEN. — LECTURES  
AT BRISTOL. — CHATTERTON. — COTTLE. — REYNOLDS. — BOWLES. —  
SHEFFIELD FEVER WARDS. — LETTER TO GEORGE BENNET. — TO  
JOHN HOLLAND.

JULY 24. Montgomery called upon Mr. Holland to walk with him to Beauchief, at the foot of which eminence extends a charming vale, containing the remains of a well-known abbey.\* He had, he said, a particular reason for a ramble thither at this time; and his companion naturally concluded that their visit to the abbey had some poetic, or at least some picturesque bearing. It turned out, however, that the main object of the poet was to enjoy the appearance of the wild roses which generally at that season festooned the hedges along the entire length of the lane, from Norton Woodseats to Beauchief Abbey, with the most luxuriant profusion. We were indeed rather too late for the heyday of their blooming, but still the scene was beautiful; and the two friends enjoyed, for its own sake, a summer afternoon's walk, partly amidst suburban scenery such as perhaps is not to be found about iron-forges and grinding-mills, except in the immediate neighbourhood

\* Beauchief Abbey was built A.D. 1183, by Robert Fitz-Ranulph, lord of Alfretton, and one of the executioners of Thomas-à-Becket.

of Sheffield.\* His fondness for flowers was unfailing,—not that he either possessed or affected any taste for botany; for although he was much more tolerant of the mutual delight which a couple of systematists might feel while bandying cabalistic terms in his presence than persons of his temperament have sometimes been found in similar circumstances, he rarely ever made a remark indicating even a remote acquaintance with a most delightful science. About the middle of March, when several bright warm days succeeded a two months' storm of frost and snow, the poet, after long imprisonment at home, was walking in the garden of his friend, the Rev. Thomas Best, when he came upon several knots of crocuses just opening their golden petals in the genial sunshine; they reminded him, he said, of that beautiful passage in which Milton describes the "vulgar constellations thick," as all deriving their light from heaven's "great luminary," for, like the stars, these flowers

"Towards his all-cheering lamp, turn . . . .

. . . . or are returned

By his magnetic beam, that gently warms

The universe, and to each inward part,

With gentle penetration, though unseen,

Shoots invisible virtue."†

He adverted to the surprise and delight with which he first saw acres of ground covered with a blue crocus (*C. vernus*), in early spring, along the Trent side, at Nottingham.

About the middle of this year Montgomery received a diploma of complimentary membership from some

\* Dayes, in his "Excursion," calls "Smithy-Wood Bottom a romantic place."

† Paradise Lost, book iii. line 570.

society in the United States, the name of which we omitted to preserve when we might have done so, and cannot now recal it. The poet's letter, in which he too at the moment of writing seems to have forgotten the *locus in quo*, is very characteristic:—

“The Mount, near Sheffield, Sept. 20. 1838.

“DEAR SIR,

“Some time since I was favoured with a communication from you in behalf of the —— Society of —— College, in the ‘far West.’ The latter phrase\*, which occurs at the beginning of your letter, has more poetry in it than all the four quarters beside, in their general designation—so much depends upon a characteristic epithet, at once setting the mind, the imagination, and the sympathies to work in bodying forth distant, invisible, and even unexistent things—the past that is gone, the present that is going, and the future that must come, as surely as *yesterday* was *to-day*, and *to-day* will be *to-morrow*, to the end of time. In this case, rise up in succession the scenery of the ‘far West’—the wilderness of ages, rather haunted than peopled by barbarians—these now vanishing before a race of strangers from beyond the great waters of the East, at whose presence and in whose progress all that is old is giving place to what is so thoroughly new, that, where change had been unknown for thousands of years, changes have been begun which will never cease to multiply in form and extent in territorial occupation (for ‘there is yet much land to be possessed’) till the United States, as they stand at this day, will be to North America (subjugated to their ascendancy not by arms, but by arts) as Rome was, on the expulsion of the kings, to the Roman empire at the return to monarchy under the sway of Augustus. Not that it is to be imagined that dynasties of sovereign princes will ever arise in the ‘far West,’ or that

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\* There are few passages in modern literature more striking than that in which Catlin amplifies the meaning of “far West,” in his entertaining work on the North American Indians.



the whole continent, when enlightened and fully peopled, will be one commonwealth: the former you proud republicans would deprecate; and the latter we staunch royalists deem impracticable, except under a crown.

"It is well that I have to turn over a new leaf, or I know not how much further I might have been carried into the 'far West' by its very name—such is the charm of picturesque phrase—till I had quite lost sight of ——— College in 1838, amidst the visions of futurity, necessarily interwoven with the rapidly unfolding realities of your transition state, in all its shapes, operations, and issues. *Onward! onward! onward!* is your one text, and the history of all generations to come will be its interminable commentary. Nothing—amidst all the labours and enterprises of your countrymen, consisting of as many tongues (in one sense of the term) as the builders of Babel, but here, instead of being *dispersed* by the anomaly, assimilating, and concurring in as many different ways, to accomplish a greater object than the erection of a tower whose top should reach to heaven—nothing amidst all these purposes and achievements is of more value and importance, nor will any be more permanently beneficial and influential, than those in which you and your associates are so honourably engaged. For just in proportion as learning—from the highest, the knowledge of 'the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make wise unto salvation, through faith in Christ Jesus,' through all the gradations of science and elegant literature, to the humblest rudiments of instruction afforded to the children of your backwoodsmen in the log-hut, or the forest sanctuary, when the axe is at rest, and the hand that wielded it is turning over the leaves of a tattered primer—just in proportion as learning, thus comprehensively understood, is successfully promulgated, will the glory, the happiness, and the security of your posterity and your institutions be confirmed, promoted, and perpetuated. Though nothing can justify the curse which modern colonisation unfortunately carries into all savage countries, laying life waste while it cultures the brute soil, it behoves those who are the innocent accessories

of such violence and wrong, to replace on the desert, converted into a paradise, a population proportionately humanised, exalted, and refined.

“Again, I am glad to take refuge on a new page from the complication of thoughts on things that were, and that are, and that shall be, which have made (as I perceive on retrospection) my sentences not *quite* so long as your rivers, though, like some of them, sufficiently diversified by shallows and rapids. I hope, however, that you and your friends will have been able, by the time you have arrived at this place, to guess the general meaning; and that they will believe me to be sincerely interested in the destinies of their country and the prosperity of their institutions, as one of its many means of blessing, both in enjoyment and in hope. Between the mother country and the Transatlantic daughter there are many affections, associations, and reminiscences common to both; among these, the prospect that their *one* language will in process of time—and time travels rapidly on your side of the water, judging by the multitude of new events that occur in a given space—be spoken throughout the length and breadth of the continent, from Mexico to the unpenetrated regions near the pole, and from the eastern to the western shores of the two oceans that lean against your land. The literature of both countries will be yours, and that which is of native growth with you will pay ample interest for the capital stock of our rearing, through eight centuries, which you have borrowed from us—that is, if you do justice to yourselves, and emancipate your literature as you have emancipated your territory from our yoke, however light, and even honourable to bear, that may be. Our standards of excellence will ever be yours, as well as ours; and the most that either of us can do will be to rival them; but we must each do this in our own way: your literature, therefore, must be no longer *colonial*, but *national*, as all else in your polity is. You have indeed some noble examples, both in prose and rhyme (but more especially in the former), of indigenous production, which must at once be recognised as American in style, subject, and spirit, yet

pure in the dialect of our best models of the last fifty years. The diffusion of our common language—not only over North America, but sown, as the seeds of it are, in every quarter of the globe as formerly divided, and throughout Australia and Polynesia—is an animating consideration to those who seek through literature to obtain ‘an honest fame or none,’ since it holds out to a better principle than ambition (though qualified, no doubt, by this master-passion of poetic aspirants) the possibility, easily converted into a hope, and that hope into an expectation, of being benefactors to kindreds and tribes in the remotest corners of the earth, and to the last generations; a hope not uninfluential, though but one in an age may live—no, may *die*—to realise it. Without making any confession of having in times past been *afflicted* with that ‘last infirmity of noble minds,’ and yet visited by intermitting symptoms of the same, it has truly been one of the sweetest rewards of the sacrifices which I have made to be enrolled among poets,—how brief soever my immortality among men may be,—to learn from many pens and voices of the West, and the ‘far West,’ that I have not laboured in vain, though I chose neither a popular nor a fashionable, nor even a classical walk of composition in which to try my powers. The recognition of my humble claims by the youth of ——— College has been one more gratifying seal of my comparative success. So far as I have striven lawfully for distinction, may each of your candidates follow my steps, but with greater and happier results to himself and mankind!

“I am very truly,  
“Your obliged friend and servant,

“J. MONTGOMERY.

“P.S. Long indisposition and other circumstances have caused the delay of my acknowledgments.”

Finding himself unable to keep an engagement which he had made to be present at a Methodist Missionary Meeting in Sheffield, he addressed the audience through the following letter:—

*James Montgomery to the Rev. George Marsden and others.*

“MY DEAR CHRISTIAN FRIENDS,

“I have just received intelligence from Bristol that the managers of the Literary Institution in that city have announced the commencement of a course of lectures—which I have been engaged ever since last spring to deliver in this month—to take place on Wednesday, the 10th instant, at two o’clock in the afternoon . . . This is the first time during many years that I have been disappointed of the honour and the happiness which my Wesleyan brethren have been pleased to confer on me at their successive anniversaries of this kind in Sheffield. An endearing chain of connection between us, of which hitherto not one link has been deficient, is thus suspended, nor can the unbroken series ever be repaired at this wanting point, whatever your Christian kindness may propose, or a graciously sparing Providence may permit to be done hereafter to prevent the *last link*, as it stands at present, from being *last link of ALL* of that chain. A longer chain, however—and of which no link has been struck off, nor I trust will be till the end of all things with me on earth—has united me with you in the bond of peace, while, during more than thirty-five years, I have been your fellow-worshipper, and occasionally your fellow-servant, however unworthy and unprofitable, as, in the sincerity of my heart, I feel myself to have been, whatever adventitious interest, from peculiar personal circumstances, may have been ascribed to my name. May He, who is sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on High, be the Master of your assembly on that evening when I can neither hope to be a partaker or a helper of your joy! May you find your place of meeting to be none other than the House of God, your platform the footstool of his throne, and your ministers upon it as the four-and-twenty elders whom John saw in the Apocalypse, who sat in the Divine Presence, or prostrated themselves ‘before him that liveth for ever and ever;’ saying (*this* be the burthen of their addresses to you,

*this* the sum of their exhortations!) ‘Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.’ ‘Amen!’ say I; and soon may ‘the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever.’ And as when these words were uttered by ‘great voices in heaven,’ — ‘the four-and-twenty elders which sat before God on their seats fell upon their faces and worshipped God, saying, we give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come, because thou hast taken unto thee thy great power, and reigned,’ — so may you *all, people* as well as ‘*elders*,’ in anticipation of the triumphant song, give ‘glory,’ in like manner, to ‘God in the highest,’ proclaim ‘peace upon earth, and good will towards men,’ by combining to send the everlasting gospel to the ends of the earth! Forgive this failure of my personal duty to you this once, among so many opportunities which you have formerly afforded me of assuring you by the living voice, speaking the language of a grateful heart, that I am, truly your obliged friend,

“J. MONTGOMERY.

“The Mount, Oct. 1. 1838.”

On the 5th of October Montgomery left Sheffield for Bristol, to deliver, before the members of the Philosophical Society in that city, his course of six lectures on the British Poets, which were received with a degree of eclat as little expected by the poet himself as it seems to have been anticipated by the gentlemen who engaged him. In one of the local journals he was greeted with an address in rhyme, which ended with these lines: —

“Thrice welcome to our city, bard beloved!  
 Patriot and Christian, honoured and approved!  
 Thou know’st her worth — hast sung her Reynolds’ praise,  
 In warm and generous, unforgotten lays;



And, as some mother whose belov'd son  
Hath from a stranger gracious honours won,  
Looks she on thee; but here that name must end, —  
No stranger now, but ever dear — a friend!”

The editor of another paper said he believed “it had not fallen to the lot of any lecturer to have met with so numerous an audience for many years; the exceedingly pleasing manner of the lecturer, with the sound, though highly poetical matter propounded, coupled with the extreme delicacy of sentiment with which he treated some of the most wayward sons of genius of high renown, the firm and masterly manner in which he at times appealed to the hearers on the effect of one improper (not to say impure) line of poetry upon the tender and unsuspecting minds of youth, drew down, to the honour of his audience, a confirmation of his views, which is sure always to be met with from the pious, the intellectual, and the grave.”\* The stipulated remuneration for the course was forty pounds; to which, on its payment, the committee of the Institution voluntarily added twenty guineas more, besides clearing a handsome sum by the sale of tickets. The lectures themselves were the same as those which had been previously delivered in London and Sheffield. As, however, several gentlemen in Bristol happened at the time of Montgomery’s visit, to be contemplating the erection of a monument to the memory of Chatterton, in the churchyard of St. Mary, Redcliffe, a project which probably originated from a passage † in the then recently published “Life” of the “Marvellous Boy,”

\* Bristol Mirror.

† “No monument as yet has been erected to the memory of the ‘Marvellous Boy.’ Prejudice has paralysed the several efforts which have been made to erect some tribute to his genius. How much longer will this be a deserved stigma on the city of his birth?”—*Life of Chatterton*, p. 294.



by Mr. Dix, our lecturer, who had just received the book from the author, was placed in a "cleft stick" as to the necessity of introducing into one of his discourses something more than a mere allusion to that unfortunate son of genius.\* He had previously, in reply to a letter from Mr. Dix, said of Chatterton's lines entitled "Resignation," "they show at least some 'light from heaven,' breathing through the darkness of the soul, which affected me so deeply when, as a young man, I read them, that I responded to them from the depths of my heart, with a sympathy which I endeavoured to express in one of my earlier poems."† Voluntarily he tendered a tribute of respect to Joseph Cottle, as one which the Bristolians were, perhaps, on the whole, less mindful of than they ought to have been, as one who had, more than any other person, been the means of connecting the name of their interesting city with some of the most illustrious individuals of modern renown as British poets: and it was one of the few regrets of our friend, that he delayed calling upon Cottle until nearly the period of his departure from Bristol, when he found that the good man had just gone from home. It may be mentioned that Montgomery was an inmate during this visit with Mr. Birtell, a Moravian‡, and who occupied the "great house," or

\* For the remarks on Chatterton and Cottle, vide Appendix C.

† Works, p. 293.

‡ In a small chapel in the city of Bath is a marble tablet to the memory of four eminent friends of humanity: the inscription, which is as follows, was written by Mr. Birtell, on hearing of Lord Nelson's victory of Trafalgar:—

"JOHN HOWARD,

"JOHN FOTHERGILL,

"JONAS HANWAY,

"RICHARD REYNOLDS.

" 'Not unto us, O, Lord, but unto thy name be glory.'

"Beneath some ample hallowed dome

The warrior's bones are laid,

“rudd house,” in Radcliffe Street, which is mentioned by Chatterton as having formerly belonged to Sir William Canynge the patron of the Apocryphal poet, Rowley.

Dispirited as Montgomery was when he left home, his visit to the western capital, with its pleasant excitement and the welcome courtesies of its inhabitants, had a most beneficial effect on his mind as well as his health; and he returned to Sheffield on the 6th of November delighted and invigorated with his tour. The Rev. Dr. Lamb, the Dean of Bristol, sent him two invitations to dinner; but they were in both cases on lecture evenings, so that the poet felt himself compelled to decline them. Montgomery dined with J. Reynolds, Esq., one of the most munificent supporters of the Bristol Institution, and son of the philanthropic Richard Reynolds, to whose memory he had several years before compiled, in precious verse, a “Good Man’s Monument.” On his return home he described to Mr. Holland a very brief interview which he had with the poet Bowles. The venerable vicar of Bremhill had written to Montgomery at Bristol, inviting him to pay a visit to his house, where he would probably meet Southey, Campbell, and Moore. This promised gratification circumstances compelled him to forego, as it was indispensable

And blazoned on the stately tomb  
His warlike deeds displayed.

“Beneath our humble roof we raise  
This monumental stone,  
To names the poor shall ever bless,  
And charity shall own.

“To soften human woes their care,  
To feel its sigh, to aid its prayer;  
Their work on earth not to destroy,  
And their reward their Master’s joy.”

that he should be at home by a certain day ; but he intimated to his correspondent that he should pass, on his way to Sheffield, through Malmsbury, where his nephew, the Rev. J. J. Montgomery, was settled as the pastor of a small Moravian congregation. With this esteemed relative and his amiable wife the poet spent a couple of days \*, and was standing in the room, waiting for the passing of the mail-coach, when he heard the house door opened to some one, whose address, given to the servant as “ Canon Bowles,” appeared to puzzle her. Montgomery, however, was at no loss, and in a moment the bard of Sheffield and the reverend sonneteer cordially saluted each other. The latter said he could not forego the pleasure thus placed within his reach, of once more seeking an interview, however brief, with an esteemed brother poet, whom he had first met several years before in a party at the house of Samuel Rogers, Esq., in London. Montgomery replied that he was heartily glad to see Mr. Bowles, but regretted that he should have come at a moment when he could not even ask him to sit down. “ I don’t hear a word you say, Mr. Montgomery ; I’m as deaf as a post, and I have left my ear-trumpet in the gig.” The two poets walked together through the street towards the coach-office ; and as Mr. Bowles presently overtook his trumpet, which, by the way, was not of small size, they carried on a brisk but brief conversation, during which the worthy canon was chiefly eloquent on the subject of the then recently-threatened parliamentary interference with that class of ecclesiastical sinecures from which he received title and emolument. Montgo-

\* Of this visit to the ruins of the celebrated abbey he has left a memorial in his stanzas, entitled the “ Wild Pink,” Works, p. 352.

mery regretted that this interview with one who, as he said, had "risen in the estimation of the public," had been so brief and hurried, as he would have been glad to have led his reverend friend from the sore subject of reforming bishops and threatened deans and canons to the more congenial one of contemporary poets and poetry. While Montgomery was at Bristol he received invitations to deliver his course of lectures at Bath, Taunton, London, and Birmingham. With his friends at the latter place, however, only, did he find it convenient to make any engagement.

Montgomery's anxiety to return to Sheffield arose from the fact that on the 7th of November a Special General Board of Governors of the Sheffield Infirmary, of which he was chairman, was to be held, to take into consideration a proposal for the establishment of a "House of Recovery for Fever Patients" on the Infirmary premises. Into the scope and accomplishment of this design he entered heartily; and when in the course of the ensuing week the question was brought before a public meeting of the town, the management of the business principally devolved upon him, while his anticipations of ultimate success in the project were not a little stimulated by receiving, immediately before he went into the meeting, a confidential note, inclosed in a general letter of approbation from Earl Fitzwilliam, authorising his correspondent, at his discretion, to name the sum of 500*l.* as the donation of the family at Wentworth House. He deemed it expedient at once to announce this munificent intention of his lordship; the consequence of which was, that pledges of other sums for a large amount, including a donation of twenty guineas from the poet himself, were presently recorded, and, in the issue, the required expense of the under-

taking — 3000*l.* — was raised, and the buildings completed in 1839.

*James Montgomery to George Bennet.*

“ The Mount, Sheffield, Nov. 26. 1838.

“ MY DEAR FRIEND,

“ . . . . Indeed I had melancholy misgivings that, if my offer were accepted, I might fail either in physical ability to execute the labour, or in intellectual power to delight, while I endeavoured to instruct, a metropolitan audience in the east, though I had not absolutely miscarried in the west at the Royal Institution last season. My throat had suffered so much from over-exertion at Hull, last March, that when I set out for Bristol I feared lest I should break down at the outset. What then was my dismay, you may imagine, when, after I thought all arrangements had been made, I was informed that it was usual, at Bristol, for the lecture delivered in the Institution there to be *repeated* on the same day, or that following! and if that plan were not adopted by me, there was some hazard that the expenses of my engagement would not be covered by the receipts. I had gone too far to retract, and I replied unhesitatingly that I must then conform to the practice. Well, when it came to the test, the attendance at the first lecture was such, — so numerous, and the audience of a class so respectable and influential from their station and intelligence, — that success was no longer doubtful; and instead of dragging, like a wounded snake, my own ‘slow length along’ through twelve deliveries, instead of six, to indifferent hearers, or none at all, the triumph was complete: to the last, and more to the last than to any other, I was hailed, and heard with more than indulgence — with kindness. I must say no more, except that the receipts were so much greater than had been known for many years, that instead of 40*l.*, for which I had consented to go to Bristol, the Council presented me with sixty guineas, and put about as much more (I am informed), as clear gain,



into their treasury. Moreover, I had no less than four invitations before I left the city, and one since I returned home, to lecture in as many different towns, including one from the Mechanics' Institute in London, for which I suspect I must be indebted to you or some of your friends. I durst not, however, venture to conclude an engagement with any of the five parties this year, except Birmingham, whither I hope to go next week, and deliver the six lectures (not doubled) before the Philosophical Institution there; after which I return to winter quarters. I have entered into no arrangements for a spring campaign, preferring, at present, the quiet of

“ ‘My hollow tree —  
My crust of bread, and liberty,’

to the anxiety, harassment, and terrors which I always feel when exposed to such ordeals, even before the most candid and liberal audiences, in strange places. I must not neglect to acknowledge with deep emotion, — and permanent, I trust, its influence will be, — that during the hard service at Bristol, instead of exhaustion or relapse of my throat-complaint, I grew stronger, my friends told me, as I went on with the work, and returned home in better health than I had set out — *all* through the mercy — manifestly through the mercy — of God; for such a result was beyond hope at the outset; and to the present I continue so well, that I do not despair of being able to discharge my duty at Birmingham, trusting to the same good Providence. . . .

“Your affectionate friend,

“J. MONTGOMERY.

“George Bennet, Esq., Grove Place, Hackney.”

In the first week of December he went to Birmingham, and commenced the delivery of his six lectures on the principal British Poets, before “one of the largest and most respectable audiences ever seen assembled on a similar occasion within the walls of the Philosophical Institution.” Here he was the guest of Mr. Knott.



*James Montgomery to John Holland.*

“Birmingham, at J. M. Knott’s, Esq., Dec. 15. 1838.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,

“I have not written earlier to you for two very sufficient reasons — I really had nothing to write about, and I had no time to write about nothing. Never in my life have I been more active in the use of either such bodily or mental faculties as yet remain to me after years of rusty indolence towards the close of the last century, when my youthful hopes had been blighted, — and thrice as many years of morbid excitement and continual conflict with constitutional infirmities since 1802, when higher and holier hopes roused me to strive for a better crown than that for which I had foregone, if not forfeited for ever, the wreath from the tree of life which I was born to wear, by being born of Christian parents, and brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, for his service on earth and his glory in heaven; — never, I may say, have I been more actively engaged than it has been my lot to be from the peculiar pressure of circumstances since the beginning of October, either at home in connection with the new and unexpectedly prosperous plan of establishing a House of Recovery at Sheffield, or abroad in delivering my lectures on the principal British Poets at Bristol, Birmingham, and Worcester. The impunity with which I bore the physical labour, and the success which accompanied the intellectual exercises of this undertaking in the former city, emboldened me to venture upon the experiment of repeating the same exertions here, as well as making three visits to Worcester in the intervals of each week. From the newspapers you will have learned that here I have been most cordially welcomed and countenanced by such audiences as it is a delight to look upon from behind a reading-desk, lending all their eyes and all their ears, with all their hearts too, when a feeble thing like me is fervently and honestly endeavouring to please them indeed, but to do them good also in pleasing

them. From certain local distinctions and differences among the good people of Worcester, no high expectations of a numerous class of listeners to such lectures as I had to offer could be indulged. It so happened, however, that on the first evening the Guildhall, nearly as capacious as our Music Room at Sheffield, was crowded with respectables of every denomination in civil and religious society; and the good people of Worcester — I again call them so, for good they have been to me — were surprised to see so many of themselves happily assembled in the same place, and all equally willing to show kindness to a stranger who had cast himself upon their indulgence. Last Wednesday my second appearance was not less generously hailed; and for my third, on Tuesday next, I think I have not much to fear, except from myself, whom no success can make self-confident; and it is well that it cannot, for knowing my own weakness and ‘something more,’ I should be a fool if I were. Now I come to business; just adding that since I left home, public, family, and friendly engagements have so occupied my time that I have been glad to live from day to day without troubling myself greatly with the things that I had left behind at Sheffield, having brought up most of my arrears of correspondence, and done all that I could do to bring the House of Recovery subscription into a train of effective progress towards completion; at the same time I have not been aware that I was neglecting any particular duty of preparation for future contingencies and obligations to be met on my return. My health and strength so far have been improved instead of impaired, and the exhaustion or rather weariness after each lecture — an hour and a half of uninterrupted speaking — has in no instance been followed by inflammation of the throat, the evil most to be dreaded, considering what a frail wind-instrument mine is, and what a desperate performer upon it I am when moved to do my best, which is too often my worst. On my return from Worcester last week, your packet with all its mail-bag contents met me, and after hastily running over them — but especially your own precious epistle — I was satisfied that,

in a difficult case, you had done everything that a wise and prudent man could do, and therefore that which was perfectly right. It reminded me, however, that with respect to that very case which so *hampered* you, though I thought before I left home that I had done all that I could that there 'should be no mistake,' I had neglected one thing—to tell you that such a trial of your discretion might occur, and to state that, *at home*, both Sarah and I had left special directions how the treasure should be distributed by the servant, expecting that the basket would be delivered at The Mount; and so I dare say it would have been, but just before I took the coach to set off I called at the 'Iris' office, and requested that any *parcel* which might come thither might be sent to you at the Music Hall, no such thing as a hare running in my head or game starting up in my brain, at the instant when I was myself on the wing. In the aforesaid distribution your good sister was included to receive a share of the booty, and therefore she will be assured, that whatever she did with it when the whole fell to her disposal, was just what we (Sarah and I) could have wished her to do under the circumstances. Thank her and thank you for this service. Will you be so good as to call at The Mount, and tell the servant to prepare the house for our return; by lighting fires in the parlour on Tuesday and Wednesday, and making any other comfortable arrangement.

"I have only to add, that any letter addressed to me here not later than Tuesday by the *Sheffield post at noon*, will reach me in due time. Meanwhile,

"I am, very truly, your obliged friend,

"J. MONTGOMERY."

## CHAP. LXXXII.

1839.

CHOLERA MONUMENT PARTLY BLOWN DOWN.—LETTER TO SAMUEL ROBERTS.—TO GEORGE BENNET.—DELIVERY OF LECTURES AT NOTTINGHAM.—CURIOUS BEGGING LETTER.—HUGH MONTGOMERIE.—LACONIC COMPLIMENTS.—BAILEY'S "FESTUS."—LETTER TO GEORGE BENNET.—"HARVEST HYMN."—VISIT TO THE POTTERIES.—NEW EDITION OF COLLECTED POEMS.—MONTGOMERY AT WENTWORTH HOUSE.—CENTENARY OF METHODISM.—LETTER TO REV. BARNABAS SHAW.—TO REV. JOHN BLACKBURN.—VERSES.—LECTURES AT BATH.

THE morning of the 7th of January was characterised by a violent storm of wind, which did immense damage in various parts of the kingdom. Among the mischiefs done in the neighbourhood of Sheffield, a portion of the spire of one of the churches, and the handsome cruciform termination of the "Cholera Monument," in the erection of which Montgomery had taken so lively an interest, were blown down. On afterwards walking up to the spot, and while looking at the shattered fragments of the cross and meditating on the means of its restoration, he conceived the two sonnets\* to which allusion has already been made: these were printed as the ground of an appeal to the public through the newspapers; and the poet and his townspeople had soon the satisfaction of witnessing

"The symbol of redeeming love  
Again this renovated shaft adorn."

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\* Works, p. 339.

The following letter refers to the death of the amiable wife of Samuel Roberts junior : —

*James Montgomery to Samuel Roberts, sen.*

“The Mount, Jan. 8. 1839.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,

“I send you a number of the Brethren’s Missionary Accounts. If I have seen less of you and your family, I have thought more of them and of you, during the last fortnight, than I ever did before, under any circumstances, in the same space of time. Every day have you been in my mind and in my heart ; and in the spirit of prayer as well as of sympathy, my remembrance of you has been before the throne of grace, as well as in the exercise of affectionate desire for your happiness, at a time when I doubt not you and those dearest to you have been disposed more than usually you are wont, to look for happiness from above rather than from those around you. May the very God of Peace himself give you peace always and by all means ! This is an apostolic benediction, and it is the only form of words in which I feel myself moved to express my most fervent wishes for you all ; since the comfort wherewith God comforteth his people (again I employ divinely inspired language) alone can truly, effectually, and permanently comfort you at this season of visitation by himself in the form of bereavement. But I have not been otherwise unmindful of you : almost every day, from one quarter or another, I have obtained information concerning my friends at and about the Grange. Last week I was either laid up with indisposition, especially with excruciating toothache, or forced, from peculiar circumstances, to make visits out of town, when I was little fit for company, so that I could not personally show that I had not forgotten those to whom I have so many reasons, from the recollection of innumerable and inestimable kindnesses shown to me in years past, to be sincerely and gratefully attached. I regretted that, on Saturday, both Sarah and I, being obliged

to go to Sheffield on some business in which each was concerned, we missed the opportunity of seeing you at The Mount. But I must not further multiply words. May the Lord bless you and keep you! May the Lord cause his face to shine upon you, and be gracious unto you! May the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace! Thus, as Moses the servant of God was commanded on solemn days to bless the congregation, I would address all your mourning circle — sorrowing indeed, but not as those that have no hope. Farewell.

“I am very truly,

“Your affectionate friend,

“J. MONTGOMERY.

“Samuel Roberts, Esq., Park Grange.”

*James Montgomery to George Bennet.*

“The Mount, Jan. 9. 1839.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,

“A few days ago I received a letter from you, dated December 8th, and addressed to me at *Birmingham*, where it had apparently not lain all the time in a corner of the post-office; for there are no less than half a dozen marks upon it, to signify that inquiries had been made in as many quarters, whether such a personage as James Montgomery, of Sheffield, were known to be sojourning in that hardware world. It is rather strange that no intelligence should have been obtained, for, from the 29th of November to the 20th of December, not one of the hundred thousand of its inhabitants made a greater noise there than I did, nor was there any name oftener in the mouths of no small number of the most respectable and intelligent classes than mine; while the newspapers, even those least accustomed to meddle with literature, took extraordinary pains to report progress of my lectures, and the approbation with which they were crowned. This will satisfy you that if I have not much sooner acknowledged that very kind and seasonable communication, as it would have been but for this miscarriage, I am not quite so much to blame as it is my fate, or rather my



fault, to be too often. I saw the Beilbys, your friends and mine,—as they made me to feel they were,—repeatedly; and on each occasion was more and more impressed with the character and worth of each of the three: for I was much indebted to them for their good will and good offices. Though I should have been happy to have seen you at Birmingham while I was there, yet if you had come over at Mr. Beilby's invitation, it would only have been by casual glimpses that I could have seen you at all: for an engagement at Worcester, occupying nearly two days in each week, I was obliged to forego a number of invitations, which otherwise I should have been glad to meet. I was most hospitably entertained in the family of Mr. J. M. Knott, formerly Mr. Beilby's partner. Mr. Conder would tell you that I had the pleasure of spending an afternoon at Dr. Hoby's, the husband of our long-esteemed friend Miss Wilson, formerly of Nottingham, who, I think, is as comfortably mated and circumstanced as we know she deserves to be. At Mr. James's, afterwards, I met a large party of excellent Christian friends, belonging both to church and chapel. He and his good wife were both very kind to me, as they ever have been; and I was introduced for a few minutes to their afflicted daughter, lying on her couch in her chamber, the emblem — emblem? no, the personification of meekness, suffering the will of God, because she felt it good to do so. At Worcester, where I read three of my essays only, I was as well received as either at Bristol or Birmingham. The Guildhall was thronged with auditors of every class among the respectables, the city being much divided on great public questions,—those especially which now agitate more or less every local community, whether large or small, and which are sowing strife wherever brethren ought to dwell together in unity, bearing the name of Christ, departing from iniquity, and proving their love to God by their love to their neighbour: for can he truly keep the first commandment who fails in the second? alas! which of us could stand proof against this test? and yet by this test our works, not less than our words, must be proved at last. May you and I be faithful to

judge ourselves, that we be not condemned when we are judged by Him who cannot be mistaken! You mention Lockhart's 'Life of Walter Scott.' Few books, indeed, have I ever read which gave me so much of that gratification which, as an adventurer in literature myself, I eagerly seek in the biography of any of the master-minds of their age, and especially of our own country. But I cannot express—and if I could I would not (fellow creature, fellow sinner that I am!) the strange misgivings that haunted me through every stage of his marvellous fortune,—marvellous in its prosperity, and more marvellous in its reverse; the chances of both extremes meeting in *one* person being millions of millions of times more beyond probability than was the unexampled success which he attained—though that was itself beyond all calculation, when he came out even in the strength of his native genius, in the 'Lay of the Last Minstrel;' no other in any age or country having reaped such golden harvests from the mere market value of the commodities which he brought out for sale, as this mighty man of the North;—I say I was haunted with a dreary misgiving concerning the result of his labours to himself, feeling that all could not be right within, while I was convinced—deeply and bitterly convinced—that there is much of what is wrong, influentially wrong, in the most popular of his productions. I am not his judge, as a frail being myself, who have need that *much* should be forgiven to me by man, and *all* by God; therefore, I condemn him not; but lament that his ten talents were not wholly so employed that his master could in reference to all of them, say 'Well done, good and faithful servant!' What a different world would it be if we all, from ten talents down to the tenth of one talent, could say, in the day of our account, 'Lord, that which thou gavest I have occupied; and there is thine own with usury!' Would not such a consummation—such a consecration of God's gifts to God's glory—go far towards the fulfilment of millennial prophecies and Paradise Restored? I can only allude to the most affecting event in our neighbourhood, in *our circle* too, small as that circle now is, and every individual of it growing nearer and dearer to our

hearts, in proportion as it contracts at the touch which will soon and for ever dissolve it. Death has been at Queen's Tower, and has left a space vacant there which was filled by its loveliest inhabitant. \* All seemed going on favourably on the Friday; she became a mother — gave birth to a child, where a child, if it could, would have chosen for itself to be born, in the prospect of what this world can afford with the promise of the next. On *Monday* that child was motherless, and that palace was desolate!

“I am truly your friend,

“J. MONTGOMERY.

“George Bennet, Esq., Hackney.”

In a letter to Mr. Bennet, dated March 29. 1839, Montgomery mentions that in a few days he is pledged to read portions of his lectures on the English Poets at Newark, Lincoln, and Grantham; and, some weeks afterwards, to deliver the whole course at Nottingham. Pending the delivery of these lectures he received a very pressing invitation to attend a Wesleyan Missionary Meeting at Oxford, and which, but for the difficulty of making the opportunity agree with the time of his anticipated visit to Bristol, he would gladly have accepted. It would not only have afforded him the pleasure of seeing that city and university with something more than the glance of a coach passenger; but he would, as he observed, have had no difficulty in finding matter for a speech so near the college (Lincoln) where the founder of Methodism had been educated, and where things had changed so much for the better since the time when “six young gentlemen were expelled the university for praying, reading, and expounding the Scriptures.”

In allusion to the published account of the Missionary Voyages of Bennet and Tyerman, he says:—

\* Mrs. Samuel Roberts. Vide p. 351. *antè*.

“I have ever thought that full justice — to say nothing more censorious — has never been done to you, and to the memory of your companion, by the neglect of that work which, as the property of the Missionary Society, ought long ago to have been reprinted; and if it had been brought before the *reading* as well as the *religious* public, as other publications have been referring to the same scenes and labours of the Society and its agents, it might have produced some pecuniary profit, and made the great things which the Lord has been doing in the South Seas and the East Indies advantageously known among those classes of persons who have lately learnt with astonishment what Mr. Williams has more happily told them. . . . I am quite willing, if authorised by you and the committee, to do my best to revise and improve, by additions, corrections, and curtailments, the work, on terms that need not be deemed unreasonable. My hands are likely to be full of employment, if health and life permit, for two years to come, as far as I shall be disposed to engage in a great work projected by the leading booksellers, but of which the plan is not yet completed, nor the arrangements made with all the necessary parties. But, at a random guess, I would prepare a copy of the work, by entire revision, and reducing the bulk one fourth, or more, if required, for thirty guineas. I would read the proofs and superintend its progress through the press, and introduce any new matter with which I might be furnished, at such further compensation as the committee might choose to allow, according to the amount of labour required for such purposes.” \*

Neither Mr. Bennet nor Montgomery were satisfied with the manner in which the “Narrative of Voyages and Travels” was allowed to fall into neglect after the sale of the first edition, believing, as they did, that a reprint of this work in a cheap and popular form would answer the purpose both of a publisher and of the

\* Letter to Mr. Bennet, March 29.

Missionary Society. This subject is often alluded to in the letters of the author and his friend, but generally in brief and cautious terms, especially by the former. In a letter, dated "Sheffield, Nov. 20. 1839," he says, in allusion to "these neglected relics that ought *not* to have been permitted to die," that "it was the business of *Nobody* to keep them alive, and *Nobody* *did* his business by consistently neglecting what he had to do. How he could have done otherwise, I pretend not to know: I have therefore no fault to find with him; and that fault which has been committed has been so divided and diluted by a kind of homœopathic process among all who had any concern at all in the management — I mean the mismanagement — that each of the individuals implicated might aver, 'Thou canst not say *I* did it;' and so let it be!" We were hardly prepared for the following inquiry, which occurs in the same letter: — "Can you tell me — for I do not recollect that I ever asked you before — whether the Missionary Committee ever received a shilling of profit from the work? The sale of 1500 copies at 36s. (after all reasonable deductions) must have realised a considerable sum." In another paragraph, Montgomery says:—"As for myself, if he [Ward, the publisher] will forward the proofs to me, free of expense, I will revise them as they go through the press, and make such slight verbal and other alterations as may be necessary — gratuitously, for the love of the work and the cause, and what I owe to you and to myself."

On the 1st of May the poet returned home, after a fortnight pleasantly spent between Ockbrook and Nottingham, the delivery of six lectures at the latter place having taken him thither. He gratified his audiences by complimentary allusions to several names of local interest — the Howitts, Ragg, Millhouse, Miller, and



especially Kirke White, amid the scenery of whose inspiration in "Clifton Grove," and elsewhere on the banks of the Trent, he had delighted to wander during this visit.

On the 6th of May he went to a Wesleyan Missionary Meeting at Bristol, from which he returned to Sheffield on the 17th, "nearly annihilated," as he said, "not altogether with labour, but with trouble," and that not in his own affairs, but on account of a slander on the Moravian missionaries at Antigua, which, having been first made and met ten years ago, had just been revived by its original author.

As a specimen of the kind of applications he was in the way of receiving, we give the following: accompanying the note was a copy of verses:—

"Toronto, U.C., June 5. 1839.

"The author of the above lines lately sent a copy of a small *brochure* of poems to Mr. Montgomery, with an intimation that he was under a course of preparation for the Christian ministry, and poor enough to be very much in want of a *suit of clothes*. It has since occurred to him, that possibly the book may not have reached Mr. M., and as he cannot afford to pay the postage of a letter about it, he takes this method of mentioning the author.

"Yours, very respectfully,

"—————"

"James Montgomery, Esq., Sheffield."

This was indeed "shooting with a long bow," but the arrow hit its mark as certainly as that shaft, "a cloth yard long," which slew the valiant namesake of the applicant mentioned in the next instance. Montgomery never received the "brochure" in question; he would not, however, allow the author to be minus its value; but addressed a kind note to him, telling him that



while he was not likely to win reputation as a poet, he might do better as a preacher: at the same time transmitting a small sum of money to help him to meet the sumptuary demands of the pulpit.

A few days afterwards he received a parcel, upon which he paid upwards of nine shillings postage: it contained a batch of the poorest poetry he had lately seen, even in this way, and a letter bearing the name of one of the redoubtable heroes of Chevy Chase, "Hugh Montgomerie," perhaps a scion of his own stock; for the postmark referred to the north of Scotland. Our poet told his correspondent that he could not afford to make him rich, or to give him any hope of becoming so by verse-making; but he should not be poorer for this appeal to one who bore the same family name; he had therefore enclosed a post-office order for a small amount.

It will be recollected that, on one occasion, Canning made a spirited speech in favour of Catholic emancipation; and Sir John Copley (afterwards Lord Lyndhurst) made one on the opposite side—the latter being substantially the matter of a pamphlet put forth by Bishop Philpotts against the measure. This, for a time, estranged the parties, till the following laconic notes passed between them:—

"DEAR COPLEY,

"I wish you could contrive to call on me. Except on account of Dr. Philpotts' stinging pamphlet, which I have now forgotten, believe me that I always have been

"Yours, very truly,

"G. CANNING."

"DEAR CANNING,

"Except for forty-eight hours, I have always been, and still am,

"Yours, very truly,

"JOHN COPLEY."

Montgomery having one day picked up a page of a Protestant pamphlet, in which the foregoing billets were quoted to show that Canning “made the first bow” in the mutual *amende honorable*, brought and showed it to Mr. Holland with a more hearty laugh than he often indulged, saying, “I will not judge which of the parties is most to be admired; but their correspondence strongly reminds me of the only instance I remember of still greater brevity—that of Rich, the manager of Drury Lane theatre, and Quin the actor.”

The following letter was addressed to the publisher of the first edition of Mr. Bailey’s poem of “Festus,” that remarkable production of youthful genius:—

*James Montgomery to Mr. Jones.*

“The Mount, Sheffield, July 18. 1839.

“DEAR FRIEND,

“I have been enabled only to run through ‘Festus’ by fits and starts, with long pauses between, to give my judgment, such as it is, in a few words. I do not hesitate to say that there is more evidence of poetical *genius*—not merely brilliant talent to use select materials, but power to invest them with the character of originality, however ordinary they may otherwise be—than I have found in any juvenile work of the kind for ten years past, though many of great promise have passed under my notice in manuscript as well as in printed volumes, submitted to my examination by new adventurers in this hopeless field of literature,—hopeless, I mean, of reaping either laurels or riches in it at present, while all the world is utilitarian in its taste and in its pursuits. The author of this strange production has hazarded utter ruin and reprobation in the very choice of his subject,—the old story of the Devil and Dr. Faustus,—not because the story is old and monstrous, but because it has already been exalted to the ‘highest heaven of invention’ by the greatest of German poets, and of European poets too,

in the esteem of some critics, but not in *mine*, though that may be no disparagement to him. The author of the 'Sorrows of Werther,' Göthe, has composed a nondescript drama entitled 'Faust,' on the same crazy tradition, by which he has obtained more fame perhaps (mixed with no small infamy, according to my old-fashioned notions) than by any other of his marvellous pieces in prose or rhyme. For a young author to follow him, or to put himself in such a situation as to provoke continual comparison with that giant, in the grotesque, preternatural, yet frequently tender and beautiful style of verse, was indeed a perilous experiment,—to escape at all is a wonder. The author of 'Festus' has so far escaped, that however the plot may be condemned as a whole, or in certain parts, which no splendour of illustration can reconcile to right taste or right feeling (in my judgment), he has, through this heterogeneous vehicle, displayed a fund of imaginative wealth, and a range of descriptive talent, with sufficient of intellectual superiority in moral sentiment, to form a pledge, that, on some happier theme, where he will condescend to follow nature, and keep within her limits of simple, pure, and noble language and passion, in the developement of human feelings and actions, with which all unsophisticated hearts and minds can sympathise, he may take almost as high a standing as he pleases among contemporaries, with a fair chance of not being denied a place of honour among the unforgotten of past times. There is *excess* in everything in this poem, — incidents, scenes, subjects, speeches, &c. are overwrought and overlaid throughout the volume. Could what is *most* excellent be separated from what is 'something *more*,' and consequently something *worse*, — in short, could the quintessence be distilled from the *rich fermenting, unfermented mass*, there would be a spirit of poetry produced which would not stand much below full proof. As an experiment, it has tested the author's powers, and shows him capable of a far better application of them. In any future composition let him avoid what may *be*, and what may be *deemed*, profaneness and licentiousness. In the exuberance of fancy, and

the heat of poetic frenzy (I presume) he has occasionally fallen into one or other, and been often on the verge of both. Here I have given you a frank, though rough and hasty, expression of my opinions, or rather convictions (imperfectly as I may have conveyed them), on reading ‘Festus.’ In the margin of the volume you may find many pencil marks; most of these refer to passages of extraordinary merit, though crude lines occur in the texture of most of them. The writer frequently forgets to count his fingers, and his cadences run beyond all bounds of legitimate metre. He must not set himself quite above all old rules until he has arrived at such a sovereignty in his art as to be able to enact and enforce new ones. Had Göthe’s ‘Faust’\* not been written, this would have been a most unaccountably original effort of invention indeed; but that having suggested the original idea, though the incidents and characters are very different, the miracle is mitigated into a performance of great but *extravagantly* excited genius, capable of better things.

“I am truly your friend,

“J. MONTGOMERY.

“Mr. Jones, Manchester.”

*James Montgomery to George Bennet.*

“The Mount, Sheffield, July 18. 1839.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,

“ . . . During the months of April and May I was much from home, and though hospitable friends made me a home wherever I was cast as a stranger, yet, being from my own fireside, my time was necessarily occupied day by day in what the day required me to do, to suffer, or to enjoy, —

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\* The copy of the letter which we use, and for which we are indebted to the kindness of Thomas Bailey, Esq., of Nottingham, the poet’s father, contains the following note:—“Not *Faust*, but the book of *Job*, was the original source of the inspiration of *Festus*.—T. B.” Was the author of this poem then unacquainted with its alleged German archetype?

for every day has sufficient of each of these, be I at home or abroad, to make me diligent, and humble, and thankful, though I rarely profit so much by this discipline as to be able to say that I am what I ought to be under its wholesome experience. At Newark, Grantham, Lincoln, and Nottingham I delivered lectures, and in each place was well attended, and appeared to have given satisfaction. . . . In May I went to Bristol to a missionary meeting, and immediately on my return entered upon a series of engagements of the like kind and others, in this town, from which I am only just cleared. . . . I was obliged to you for serving Mr. John Holland, whom I recommended to apply to you, by procuring him the loan of Baxter's 'Paraphrase of the Psalms.' This I had seen in the hands of the late Mr. Orme, and thought his widow might still hold the copy. I have his [Baxter's] *Poems*, and had the honour of attracting public notice to them, after long and unmerited neglect, by specimens which I quoted in the 'Christian Poet.' The little volume containing these was so scarce, or at least so little known, that though my copy had been given me by a Sheffield bookseller as of little market value, I found the same put down in a London catalogue at two guineas soon afterwards. . . . To-morrow it will be fifty years since I took a step which turned the whole course of my life into a channel entirely contrary to its early and proper destination. Every thought, feeling, word, and act of my existence since then has been different from what the same would have been had I obeyed my original 'calling and election' of grace, to serve my generation 'according to the will of God,' my Saviour, as a member and minister of the Church in which he gave me birth, and clearly showed me his onward purposes of love towards me. What I have thus forfeited, what I have thus lost, in time and for eternity, by my great unfaithfulness, He only can know who sees all things as they are, as they might have been, and as they ought to be. Fifty years ago I *cast myself* away—but *He* did *not* cast me away. Goodness and mercy have followed me all my days, through all my wanderings; and it is yet possible—for with God all things are possible—that I may



dwell in his house for ever. Amen! Amen! So be it! And *there* may I meet you and all whom we have loved that are gone thither already, and all whom we love, and are yet on the way! The first of my hymns in the ‘Christian Psalmist,’ beginning ‘I left the God of truth and light,’ was written on the anniversary of that apostate act of sin, of folly, and of shame, in 1807 — sixteen years after I had committed it. Pray for me, and believe me ever,

“Your affectionate and grateful friend,

“J. MONTGOMERY.

“George Bennet, Esq., Grove Place, Hackney.”

August 22. A spring unusually cold and dry was followed by a summer so ceaselessly dripping, that for some time it appeared that the corn would suffer in the fields, even if eventually it ripened at all. These discouraging prospects of the harvest season, occurring as they did in a year of frequent Chartist excitement and rioting, cast a gloom over the public mind; during a conversation on which Montgomery put into Mr. Holland’s hand the verses entitled “Harvest Hymn, in a Wet Season,”\* saying, “You know what to do with them if you think proper;” and in conformity with this hint, they appeared in the “Sheffield Mercury,” from which they presently found their way to every part of the kingdom.

September. Some of the supporters of the Bristol General Hospital, having determined to get up a bazaar in aid of its funds, applied to Montgomery for a contribution, suggesting a few copies of verses in his writing, on embossed cards. He at once complied with the request, sending, at the same time, six little sketches in rhyme, entitled the “Miracles of our Saviour,”† and which, being neatly printed and illustrated with woodcuts, produced 75*l.* for the charity.

\* Original Hymns, CCLXXVIII.

† Not in his Works



Having made an engagement to deliver a course of lectures at Newcastle-under-Lyne, he proceeded thither on the 14th of September, and immediately on his arrival was induced to agree to repeat this series at Hanley. While in this neighbourhood he paid a welcome visit to the Rev. John Hutchinson, of Blurton, in Staffordshire, one of the party in the excursion to Wharnccliffe in the summer of 1818, as commemorated in the "Little Cloud." He had indeed been strongly solicited to make his home at the parsonage, which, argued his friend, if he wished for seclusion and quiet, ought exactly to suit him, inasmuch as "it was not long since taken for a tree, being so wrapped in ivy." Mr. Hutchinson, now a canon of Lichfield, is grandson to the celebrated Lieutenant-General Hutchinson, Governor of Massachussets in New England, and lineally descended from Taylor, the proto-martyr of the Marian persecution. Montgomery said he at once liked him the first time he saw him at Sheffield with their mutual friend, the Rev. Thomas Cotterill; and from what he had since seen of him, he was convinced that he had in him not only the blood but the spirit of his ancestors, and would himself become either an exile or a martyr for the truth's sake, should circumstances require any such sacrifice from him! This visit to the Potteries was a very seasonable relief to his mind, harassed as he had been for several months past by party squabbles in connection with the Sheffield Infirmary buildings.

Longmans had proposed a new edition of his poems, in the style of Southey's and Wordsworth's \*, as recently published. They were willing to spend 500*l.* in printing and embellishments. Montgomery considered

\* Moxon had just given Wordsworth a thousand guineas for the privilege of printing a single edition of 3000 copies of his collected works.

this a spirited offer, and was disposed to sacrifice the stereotype plates of the previous edition \*, which had cost 100*l.*, and proceed at once with the work. He regretted that of the many portraits which had been taken of him, there was not one which he should like to see engraved for this purpose. Mr. Holland replied there need be no difficulty on this point with a respectable London artist; adding, that the author's face was not, perhaps, exactly what it had been. *Montgomery*: "On the other hand, bad as it is—and may always have been for portraiture—it is certainly rather improved than deteriorated by age. All the likenesses that have appeared have been too smooth-faced and young-looking, but now the 'crow's foot' is to be seen: the lines which time has traced will aid the artist in giving effect to his sketch." *Holland*: "And the vignettes? I should like to see them derived from real scenes and incidents, rather than fancy compositions." *Montgomery* (laughing): "Fulneck Hill Side, or our old house in the Hartshead, I suppose!" *Holland*: "And why not?" *Montgomery*: "All that I shall do in the matter will be to request the designer carefully to go over the poems before he uses his pencil: come what may of the illustrations, I am anxious, I confess, to leave behind me, in a respectable form, pieces in which the public have been pleased to take some interest."

On the 14th of October, and day following, *Montgomery* was at Wentworth House, on the invitation of Earl Fitzwilliam, who was not only anxious to introduce the poet to the Honourable Mr. Stephenson, the representative of the United States to Great Britain, but also to talk with him about removing the Sheffield Infirmary to another, and, in his lordship's opinion,

\* These plates were ultimately sold to some publisher in the United States.

more favourable site; a project to which, on several accounts, Montgomery was decidedly opposed. The ladies afterwards gathered about him, and drew him out on the subject of poetry; Lady Carlisle and Mrs. Stephenson spiritedly pleading the claims of their sex to poetical equality with the men, adducing especially the works of Mrs. Hemans in evidence. He admitted their merits; but, after conceding all he could to the claims of his fair opponents, he concluded by the quiet but significant remark that Shakspeare, Spenser, Milton had not, as yet, had any equals among the British poetesses.

On the 25th of October the Wesleyans, not only in Great Britain but in every quarter of the world, celebrated the "Centenary of Methodism" with appropriate religious services, including the singing of a hymn\* composed for the occasion by Montgomery, and published, with musical accompaniments by different parties, at the beginning of the year.

"On that day," said he, in a missionary speech a month afterwards, "from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, and in different lands throughout his entire circuit round the globe, there had not been one hour, through the four-and-twenty, in which, from some portion of the Wesleyan body, had not been ascending to heaven—glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will towards men! On that day the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ had been abundantly poured upon the congregations, and families, and individual members who entered into the spirit of that religious commemoration. But while the praises of that hallowed day were for the past, the prayers of the faithful were put up for the blessing of God on the succeeding century. Not one of the assembly present will witness the

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\* "A hundred years ago," &c.—*Original Hymns.*

termination of the century just commenced; but their children may then be living—and what will be the state of the world at that time? Assuredly, if the Spirit of God so prosper the work during the present as He has done during the past century—if you and your successors labour and pray as your fathers have done, the triumphs of the Redeemer, achieved through his instrumentality, at the close of another hundred years, will be celebrated not only in as many lands and as many languages as at present, but in every land and language under heaven.”

*James Montgomery to the Rev. Barnabas Shaw.*

“The Mount, Sheffield, Nov. 6. 1839

“MY DEAR FRIEND,

“When I received your packet, and, on opening it, saw there was something like work in my way expected from me, my perverse heart—vexed sometimes too much by similar applications—rose to stubborn height, and said within me, ‘*No; I will not:*’ but when I turned one leaf, and saw the signature to your accompanying letter, ‘down dropt my angry mood,’ and I said, ‘No,’ again,—but it was with another phrase, and in a different key,—‘No; I retract the former rash negative: I cannot refuse *Barnabas Shaw.*’ I was, however, as much out of tune, nearly, as one of Judah’s harps hanging on the willows by the rivers of Babylon; for through turbid if not deep waters I had been passing in a local strife with some of my offended neighbours about a public charity, and I was far from having recovered my equanimity. An idea, nevertheless, came into my mind, and as well as I could, under many interruptions and discouragements from failing spirits, I wrestled with it till I had wrought it into the form which you will see on the foregoing leaf.\* I hope you will be better pleased with it than I am: as I cannot now improve it, or substitute some-

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\* “Perils by the Heathen.”—*Works*, p. 242.

thing more excellent, accept it as a proof of my good will, if not of my talents.

“Your second letter has just reached me. I will forward the manuscript of your chapter, with a copy of these stanzas, to Mr. Everett, according to your desire; but you will please to tell him *not* to insert them, if on perusal they do not meet your approval. I wrote to Mrs. Brackenbury a few days ago; present my best regards to her. Accept the same for yourself, and your esteemed partner—if yet she be your partner in the wilderness of this world, as she was in Africa.

“Believe me truly your friend,

“J. MONTGOMERY.

“Rev. B. Shaw, Mrs. Brackenbury’s,  
Raithby Hall, Lincolnshire.”

The wife of the Rev. John Blackburn, incumbent of Attercliffe, having died on the 23rd of October, her bereaved husband adverted to his loss in a letter to Montgomery, who, in reply, says:—

“What can I say to the most touching paragraph in your letter, that which came at once from the depth of your heart, and found its way to the bottom of mine? I have sympathised with you—I might say almost daily (and at every remembrance of it deeply), in your late trial of bereavement. The intelligence fell like a thunder-stroke upon me; but it was the Lord’s doing, and though marvellous (mysteriously so) in our eyes, we must say, ‘Good is the Lord,’ and be dumb (with resignation) because ‘He did it.’ I have no words or topics of consolation to adduce to you; nor will I even say, ‘be comforted;’ yet I may pray—and I will pray—that the God of all comfort Himself may be your comforter. Jesus wept over Jerusalem, doomed to perish because she would not let Him save her. Jesus wept over the grave of Lazarus, though He knew what He would do to verify his own glorious assurance to the weeping sisters, ‘I am the resurrection and the life,’ &c.,—you know the



rest ; I need not tell you to finish the pledge which He then gave — that all who sleep in Him shall wake in immortality : therefore ‘weep you,’ till He wipes away your tears. I dare not notice the hint at the close of your communication on this subject. If—for I pretend not to inspiration—if anything that I can offer you is given to me (I ask not whence) in some of my few happy moods, you shall hear from me, though it tarry long.”

*James Montgomery to the Rev. John Blackburn.*

“The Mount, Nov. 27. 1839.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,

“Almost at the last hour before I set out on my journey, where I expect to be detained till Christmas, I send you — because you desired it — some lines on a late affecting occasion. They have been composed with many interruptions and some discouragements, which made me repeatedly lay them by till a more convenient season ; but such as they are you will accept them in good part. I have done my best in respectful remembrance of the departed, as well as to testify my esteem for the living. With my fervent prayers for yourself and for your remaining family,

“I am truly your friend,

“J. MONTGOMERY.”

“Weep, for our Saviour wept ; — a Man was He  
Of griefs and sorrows all his journey through,  
From Bethlehem’s crib to lone Gethsemane ;  
And as He did, his suffering saints may do ;  
Since all the tears that innocently fall,  
He shed Himself, and sanctified them all.

“Weep, for our Saviour wept ; — let tears of grief  
O’erflow the opened fountains of your eyes ;  
An angel troubles them, to bring relief,  
The streams grow healing as the waters rise ;  
Soon the clear pool shall run itself to rest,  
And heaven be seen again within its breast.



“ Weep tears of tenderness, when you retrace  
Days of delight, that flew on wings like doves ;  
Looks, tones, endearments, acts of simple grace,  
Most sweet, most precious to the heart that loves ;  
Once mutable as clouds, — now fixed they dwell,  
Like stars, in memory’s sphere, unchangeable.

“ Weep tears of pity, when you clasp and kiss  
The dear, dear little ones she left behind ;  
Their mother then, though everywhere you miss,  
And most when them without *her* care you find ;  
Look, look again ; in each ingenuous mien,  
From you unparted *there*, she still is seen.

“ Weep tears of gratitude for mercies past,  
That made your earthly cup of bliss run o’er :  
They had their seasons — nothing here can last ;  
Yet higher, greater blessings are in store ;  
Even through the vale of death a glory shines,  
Which brightens as the day of life declines.

“ Weep tears of joy, when at the hour of prayer  
Your family below, and those above,  
Are ever present with your thoughts, and share  
In turn the warm outpourings of your love :  
For *these* thanksgivings, and for *those* the lot  
Of them that are at rest ; — ah ! then WEEP NOT.  
“ J. M.”

At the beginning of December he went to Bath, where he was engaged to deliver sixteen lectures at the Literary Institution in that city. The prospect of such an ordeal, was to the lecturer — whatever it might be to his patrons — somewhat formidable ; it was likewise connected with a condition, not only novel, but somewhat repugnant in his case — his remuneration was to depend upon the sale of tickets. The final result, however, was satisfactory to all parties. The personal respect shown to the bard was very gratifying to his feelings.

In a long letter to Miss Sarah Gales, dated Dec. 10., the poet says:—

“ I have not, on the whole, felt so well for the last nine or ten months, as I have done in my present situation. The latter, however, like my former imprisonment in York Castle, grows every day more and more pleasant with the nearer prospect of its termination. . . . As to the success of my lectures, I am told that my audiences are more numerous than have favoured any former candidate for the most precarious of all kinds of literary patronage, except Mr. Combe the phrenologist, for several years past. He, indeed, ran away with many more heads than I have been able to lay hold upon, but I would count hearts with him or any philosopher in the lecturing line who has visited this great city. At the same time, the heads that I have attracted have been of the better order; I never read my papers to more attentive and really intellectual audiences.”

He had a pleasant interview with the octogenarian, Dr. Nott, the enthusiastic editor and biographer of Surrey the poet, with whose opinions on the versification of his author Montgomery in the main coincided; though not with certain of the learned Doctor's speculations relative to the “Fair Geraldine.” So far as we are aware, the only thing in rhyme which this visit produced was a translation of one of the sonnets of Petrarch; it is identified with the following incident:—Miss Shute, an ancient lady who attended Montgomery's lectures in Bath, would lend him a folio copy of the “Faërie Queen;” and therewith she sent to his lodgings a handsome and curious old edition of Petrarch's sonnets. By some mishap our friend chanced to upset his inkstand on the table. His first anxiety was about the cloth: he had, however, hardly dabbed up the pool, when to his horror he saw a frightful blotch on the fair page of the Tuscan bard! What

was to be done? An immediate source of consolation was the thought that the book belonged to a woman; and therefore, he believed, his fault would not be deemed inexpiable. On returning the volumes to their owner, he frankly avowed the damage, and apologised as well as he could. The good lady, with the kindness and promptitude of her sex, instantly replied, that she should consider the blotch as a memorial of Montgomery's visit to Bath, and she would make a memorandum on the page to that effect. Our friend told her he had saved her the trouble of doing that; for partly by way of acknowledging his accident, and partly as a penance for the negligence, he had imposed upon himself the task of translating one of these sonnets, a transcript of which she would find in the volume. He mentioned to Mr. Holland that several of his friends at Bath had expressed a wish that he should publish the lectures he had delivered; but his fancy was that most persons would rather hear him read them than read for themselves. He then mentioned that he had received five hundred pounds for delivering these lectures at different places. He had found, on his return home, his account current with Longman and Co.; by which it appeared that the year's profits on his works was only about sixty pounds: the entire expenses of stereotyping the last edition had, however, been liquidated.

On the 16th Dec. died Ebenezer Rhodes, aged 77. Having some years previously become a bankrupt, a fund was raised to support his declining life, Montgomery subscribing 100%, and Chantrey giving privately 50%. a-year to their old friend, who moreover made something by his knowledge in a novel branch of local manufacture,—the preparation of steel plates for engravers. Rhodes died considerably in debt, leaving behind him, besides a thriftless son, two widowed

daughters with children, and four others unmarried and unprovided for. The position and pleas of these women availed not only to engage Montgomery in the arrangement of their affairs, but to involve him in some pecuniary sacrifices, only to be explained and hardly to be defended on the ground of his sensitive good nature; for, not only did he borrow\*, for the immediate use of these parties, 250*l.* on property ultimately falling to them, giving at the same time his own bond to the lender in case of accident, but he advanced money to one of the widows to help to pay her debts; also to the unmarried daughters to help them to purchase their father's household furniture: more than this, he paid out of his own pocket a considerable sum, purely in respect to his late friend's memory, as an additional dividend to his creditors beyond what his effects produced! We mention this affair the more distinctly, because we never heard it alluded to by the parties on either side: we might add, because there had for a long time previously been little intimate intercourse, and never any of a religious kind, between Montgomery and Mr. Rhodes. Speaking of the latter, the poet said to a person confidentially concerned between them:—

“ I have seen in his case, that a man may have a world of acquaintance, and scarcely a friend among them, without their being unkind, but none having a tie strong enough to help in such an extremity. Of the numerous individuals who some years ago subscribed a large sum for Mr. Rhodes, and the residue of which has relieved his surviving children from immediate want, to one only they seemed to have any

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\* He might himself have advanced the money, instead of asking a friend to lend it; but as he was acting on behalf of a bereaved family, he did not choose to place himself in a position with respect to them which could allow the possibility of an after imputation that he had acted at all interestedly.

cause to look for settling his last affairs, and that one declined to interfere. Then I could not refrain offering myself to the service; and, having undertaken it, by the blessing of God I mean to go through with it at any inconvenience. I have counted the cost, and can bear it."

But while "one friend" thus declined to interfere, whoever he was, and whatever his reasons for so acting, another, who ought to be named,—the late John Bailey, Esq.,—most readily and generously joined Montgomery, and enabled him to satisfy all the creditors of their old consociate. His generosity indeed was not less conspicuous than his genius; and, to say nothing of other cases, the foregoing remarks suggest this passing reference to a particular transaction in which he voluntarily paid *more than a thousand guineas* to satisfy claims upon a person whose creditors neither had nor pretended to have against the poet any claim either in law or equity, more than they may have against the most indifferent reader of this page; nor did we ever hear him thus specifically mention the case.

## CHAP. LXXXIII.

1840.

NEW YEAR'S REFLECTIONS. — VERSES IN A "SPIRIT'S BOOK." — PENNY POSTAGE. — LETTER TO GEORGE BENNET. — MORAVIANS. — KEBLE'S VERSION OF THE PSALMS. — SEPIA-TINT DRAWINGS. — THE SHOT SKYLARK. — THE QUEEN'S MARRIAGE. — FESTIVAL CELEBRATIONS OF THE EVENT. — LETTER TO REV. ROBERT WOOD. — TO JOHN BLACKWELL. — TO GEORGE BENNET. — LECTURE ON THE "IMPERFECTNESS OF HISTORICAL RECORDS." — CONVERSATION. — PICKERING'S PORTRAITS OF MONTGOMERY AND MISS GALES. — PREPARATION OF A NEW EDITION OF THE "MISSIONARY VOYAGES AND TRAVELS."

THE earliest glimpse which we obtain of the poet at the beginning of 1840 is in the following letter to his most confidential friend, and the tone of which is exactly such as becomes a new year's greeting by one so entirely Christian in all his communications.

*James Montgomery to George Bennet.*

"The Mount, Sheffield, Jan. 1. 1840.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"You and I who, in our correspondence, have been wont to shake hands all over the world in former times, however far asunder in body, now exchange that cordial sign of salutation across that infinitesimal part of a moment which separates an old year from a new one, compared with whose tenuity the Mahometan bridge which connects time with eternity — sharper than a scimitar's edge, along which departed spirits must pass to Paradise, or, falling on either side, drop into Erebus—is a broad and macadamised highway;



for, where the last day of December, on which your letter, first received, *ended*, and the first of January, on which my answer is in progress, as fast as my pen can convey it, *began*, must be determined by those who can discern invisibilities, and comprehend the mysteries of time and space in a manner which no created intellect on earth can conceive. Emerging from this 'palpable obscure,' I congratulate you on having arrived (though later than I, by nearly two years, I believe) at the close of 1839, through the good hand of our God upon you, to raise such an Ebenezer of thanksgiving as your brief letter contains, on the retrospect of all the way that He has led you, from infancy to within sight of the declared goal of human life, beyond which infirmity and sorrow are the general portion of survivors. Among the 'thousand, thousand precious gifts, which you have, during that long period of changes and trials, of mercies and chastenings, received of his free bounty, in providence and grace, I am sure you feel that '*not the least*' is that *one* which Addison so emphatically records in his admirable hymn, — 'a grateful heart, to taste those gifts with joy.' Ah! indeed, without *that*, all the temporal and spiritual benefits with which the good Lord daily loadeth his people would be bestowed by Him in vain, or would be remembered only in judgment against them,—for *ingratitude*, like *unbelief*, in such an issue, would be sufficient cause for righteous condemnation at the bar of Him who alone can estimate the guilt which either one or the other of those two dreadful words involves in its true and its whole interpretation. O that on this point we were more wise and more considerate, that we might better understand our latter end, as influenced by our failure in this. In that tremendous summing up of the sins of the heathen world, — in which the world called Christian is hardly less criminal, — contained in the first chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, there is a very remarkable clause, v. 21.: 'Because, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, *neither were thankful*.' Here I pause to say that all this sermonising, as some might scornfully call it, is addressed to myself, and not to insinuate deficiency

in you, who, both knowing God through the revelation of his Spirit, *do* glorify Him as God, and *are* thankful. So, as a fellow-sinner, it is my duty to judge of you, believing that on this subject you will be led so to judge yourself as not to be judged to condemnation by that gracious Master to whom alone you stand or fall. But I must not forget to wish you 'a happy new year,' while I am in the vein; with my fervent prayer that during the course of it, and through as many more as may be added to your life, you may have increasing cause and increasing will to praise the Lord for multiplied obligations, 'till death his crowning mercies seal, and make the sacrifice complete.' While I was from home, a parcel from you arrived, containing several books, of which Orrery on Swift, and the Portraits of Queens in French, shall be returned. The volume of Sandys's Psalms I should have thankfully appropriated, but having a folio copy, with the old tunes in musical characters, I have made our friend John Holland richer and happier by presenting it to him as your gift; for which he expressed great obligation to you. No version of the Psalms in metre, in our language, approaches that of Sandys in poetical spirit, with all its inequalities and its general unsuitableness for congregational singing. On the hills of Palestine where the son of Jesse fed his flocks, and in Jerusalem where he had ruled the chords of the lyre with as sovereign a hand as he had ruled the hearts of his people, Sandys caught a measure of the spirit which was poured out in such abundance of energy and grace upon the royal prophet, and responded to his Hebrew Melodies in English Songs of Zion not unworthy of the inspired strains of the latter, though it was but as the linnet learning the lay of the nightingale, and imitating its cadence on her own small pipe. . . . I send this letter by post to satisfy you, as early as may be, that I, as well as yourself, have survived the storms of not the last year only, and the nine preceding ones in which we have been accustomed to write three in the penultimate, but all those that have come and gone since 1771. This is an awful age to look back upon, which may be done in a moment, — though more like the

prospect from Pisgah towards the wilderness, than over Jordan to the land of promise. O that from this point of time on which I stand, with the 'day of temptation' behind me, the verge of the dark river below, and what death hides of eternity beyond, I could 'with unobscured eye,' by faith behold the heavenly Canaan before me, and 'read my title clear' to 'a house not made with hands,' as the 'purchased possession' for my soul, itself purchased as part of the reward of his soul by the Redeemer of a lost world! What I thus fervently wish for myself, may you also be privileged to anticipate, and experience an earnest of its blessedness through life! The French translation of Dante, and the Rheinish Testament shall be forwarded in a few days. My lectures at Bath were very successful — though little promising at first; the audience were of a superior class generally; and not only so in respect of station, but intelligence: I never was better pleased myself, nor seemingly afforded more pleasure to others, by my exertions on such an occasion.

"I am truly, as ever, your friend,

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"George Bennet, Esq., Grove Place, Hackney."

Few persons, as we have repeatedly intimated, were in the way of having their good nature taxed by the solicitations of the owners of albums more frequently than our friend; and although, except in particular cases, he did not pretend to do more than transcribe some hymn or other short composition lying by him, the incessant demands thus made by all sorts of persons would have proved intolerable to any one less willing to give pleasure to others at whatever expense to himself. In the beginning of this year an elegant volume of this class was presented to him under circumstances which induced him to compose an original inscription. It had, in fact, been presented by a gentleman to his bride as a marriage present; but the lady dying before its pages had received a single offering, left behind her

a strongly-expressed wish that Montgomery, for whose autograph the book had been reserved, should still be asked to inscribe the first page. He did so, in the following touching address : —

*“ To the Contributors to this Album.*

“ With fear and trembling on this volume look,  
’T is not a mortal’s but a spirit’s book,  
Wherein let none a line, a thought indite,  
That will not bear the day of judgment’s light,  
When every secret thing shall be made known  
By Him that sitteth on the ‘ great white throne.’

*“ To the Readers of the Contents.*

“ With tender reverence on this volume look,  
A saint in glory owns the humble book ;  
A bridal gift, by her consigned in trust  
To one dear friend when she returned to dust,  
A link of love, unbroken, still to be  
’Twixt him in time, her in eternity.

*“ To Her who left this Book behind.*

“ Spirit made perfect ! if sometime thine ear,  
’Midst angels’ songs, may earthly accents hear ;  
If, glancing from the unseen world on high,  
Words written on these pages meet thine eye,  
Hear — read — approve, while I presume to say  
What thou, if prayer be made in heaven, dost pray :  
‘ Our Father, God ! thy kingdom come ; thy will,  
In earth, as heaven, let all that breathe fulfil ;  
And, oh ! since I am raised by sovereign grace,  
Thus in thy house to dwell, and see thy face,  
May those with whom below my heart was bound,  
Be here, with me, in life eternal found !’

“ The Mount, Jan. 21. 1840.”

The "Penny Postage," so great a boon to the public in general, was by no means gratefully welcomed by Montgomery. In a letter to Mr. Everett, Jan. 13., he says :—

"Thank the *Penny Postage* for this intrusion upon your time and patience — yet even the chance of pleasing you is well worth a penny ; so you will take my good will for my good deed. Mr. Wesley has taught religious societies the value of a penny, and statesmen are endeavouring to turn it to the same advantage as he and our Ladies' Associations for Bible and Missionary purposes, and your class-leaders, have long been successfully practising. I fear, however, that the new experiment in political economy will prove that its originator and his followers on the Treasury bench have been penny wise and pound foolish. I have said, *I fear*,—but, if it would not be unpatriotic, I would say, *I hope*,—so far as concerns myself, that it may be a failure. I don't read in Esop that the man who had a goose that laid golden eggs ever saved so much as one to set his bird upon, and try whether another of the species — verily a *rara avis* — might not be hatched from it. 'The schoolmaster abroad,' however, has proceeded so far in 'the march of intellect' as to persuade our wise men of the West—who own that golden-egg-layer, John Bull—to make the trial, and the result will be (even should it not prove addle) that the golden egg will produce a copper gosling, which will lay penny pieces ; and no multiplication of these, were all the geese in the kingdom (since the commons have been enclosed) to issue the same coin in the breeding season, will ever equal in value the sterling metal which they will supersede. This, I dare say, is nonsense, and yet not without some meaning ; at least, when I deviated into it I meant to say that I would rather pay a shilling for one letter than twelve pennies for a dozen, for, unfortunately for me, my correspondence is already too numerous and troublesome, not to receive, or even to pay heavy postage for its multifarious demands upon my attention, but to answer ; for while I never grudge the pains of reading a letter, the pleasure of writing one is a penalty too



inconvenient for me to pay, except upon compulsion. I could prove that this is not from any disrespect, want of affection, or deficiency of gratitude towards those who lay me under obligation for one or other of these amiable reciprocities by their epistolary favours, but because I am oppressed with the latter, and my mind, my time, and my very conscience are over-taxed for returns to inquiries, solicitations, and a hundred nameless modes of extorting my sentiments on all manner of subjects, with which it is presumed I am acquainted. Answers to such letters really demand such an exercise, often, of ingenuity to meet the object of the writers, or to evade it without discourtesy, that I am ready to be ‘mute from contumacy,’ whatever offence I give, and whatever unfavourable judgment may be passed upon me by my applicants. Now this transmutation of the precious into the baser metals in the economy of the post-office threatens me with a proportionate increase of annoyance of this kind, and this very day I have received proof of it in three letters, which (post paid, indeed) will cost me more thought to answer than I would sell to any bookseller for three pounds in gold from her Majesty’s Mint, with her own image and superscription on each—that is, if I reply to my clients in full to the cases they have submitted to me.”

*James Montgomery to George Bennet.*

“The Mount, Jan. 24. 1840.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,

“. . . . . The new anti-slavery tract I will put into the hands of our friend, the Rev. Thomas Smith, with your instructions. There is nothing worth sending you in return published here. Yes, but there is, and I only just recollect it—the opening lecture by the Rev. Thomas Best, of the Church of England Instruction Society, embracing the plans of the Mechanics’ Library and Institute, connected with religious principles. I send a copy of the little series of verses on ‘Our Saviour’s Miracles.’ I had only thirty



copies at first, and am obliged to be sparing—not grudging—even to my best friends. They were sold at 2s. and 2s. 6d. each [at Bristol] on purpose to make a large sum for the Hospital, and they realised—I think I told you how much. ‘The emancipation,’ albeit ‘total and immediate,’ of the Post-office has made your pen, speaking from your heart, quite eloquent on the benefits it will undoubtedly confer on thousands who have heretofore been prevented from making epistolary visits to absent friends by the enormous rates of *coach fare* extorted by Government for conveying that which is the lightest of anything under the sun—the *mind*—on its travels from one end of the kingdom to the other. Certainly, if the *body*, on its railway transmission from Sheffield to London, were to pay in proportion to its comparative specific gravity, it would cost me more to take a trip to see you, than I would sell for in any slave market of Europe, Asia, Africa, or America,—aye, ten times as much, at 2s. 6d. an ounce. I rejoice with you in the change, so far as those with whom you specially sympathise are concerned; but for myself, I can hardly yet say I am well pleased to be lightened of my quondam share of the national tax. I have no objection to *receive* as many letters as may come to me from the invisible hands of strangers, and would not grudge to pay the postage myself, were the penny all the impost; but, unfortunately, these gratuitous correspondents expect to be compensated in kind, and such answers as I must send in return are often most irksome to furnish, always requiring some exercise of mind (letters of business are letters of pleasure in comparison with these which sometimes squeeze the brain to its very dregs) which I can ill afford. But I must not let you into all the secrets of a poet’s miseries who has gained a petty notoriety. I have already had earnest of what I may look for, if I live a little longer, by the multiplication of my sorrows from this opening of the floodgates of that lock of that canal of literal intercourse which has hitherto kept me sufficiently afloat in the almost stagnant coffer below, with perpetual dribblings from the cranny between the closed leaves [which keep the water at its level

above]. You have before now received, through the newspapers, pretty copious details of the outbreak of that new species of insanity, called *Chartism*, in your native town, on Sunday morning se'nnight. Had one of the horde betrayed the plan of the conspiracy before a blow had been struck, it would have appeared such a nightmare dream of folly and iniquity, that his testimony would not have been believed ! but that in this immensely populous and professedly Christian neighbourhood there actually had been concocted a scheme of murder, conflagration, and pillage, upon a scale more monstrous than anything recorded in our country's annals cannot be doubted. . . .

‘ Oh, ’t is horrible, horrible, most horrible ! ’

Thank God ! his arm alone saved us from having, if survivors, to say on the Sabbath of January 12th, there were hundreds of murderers and as many murdered people among us ; so that a city stormed and given to the sword and the flame was a type of our peaceful inland and island town, which knew the revolutionary war of France with all Europe only by the records of its devastations, with its price, at a distance, of the blood of our brethren, and at home of some hundreds of millions of money — the cheapest part of the cost.

“ I am ever your faithful friend,

“ J. MONTGOMERY.

“ George Bennet, Esq., Grove Place, Hackney.”

February 1. The Rev. Bennet Harvey, who had been several years a Moravian missionary in Antigua, was a guest at The Mount during a visit to Sheffield, where he preached and held a public meeting ; at which about 40*l.* was collected. “ Sheffield,” said Montgomery to Mr. Holland, “ has behaved very kindly, on my account, in this matter, for which I am very grateful : altogether the sums sent, chiefly through my humble instrumentality, from this town, in aid of

the Brethren's missions, during the last twenty years, have not amounted to much less than 3000*l*."

A few days afterwards Mr. Holland placed in his hands Keble's version of the Psalms, accompanied with an expression of disappointment that the poetico-clerical author of the "Christian Year" had not been more successful in his version.

*Montgomery*: "He has put on the *torture boot*, and confessed! His work contains many elisions and expletives which, perhaps, his friend Dr. Pusey will understand, but of which neither the merit nor the meaning will be generally appreciated by ordinary readers." *Holland*: "You don't merely mean that the Oxford poet has inculcated *Puseyism* in his Psalm-metres?" *Montgomery*: "No: I refer to the use of certain terms and turns of phraseology which are mainly current among scholars."

Feb. 9. Mr. Holland dined with Montgomery, who, on something being said about skylarks, mentioned the following incident: About 1799 he became acquainted with Mr. Bonnington (father of the late lamented artist of the name), who, having been originally at sea, subsequently became gaoler at Nottingham, from which situation he was removed in consequence, we believe, of his Jacobinical politics. "He taught drawing," said Montgomery, "in that slight washy style which was then fashionable; you see it in Gilpin's books: it was adapted, according to my friend, from its indistinctness, to *leave something for the imagination to supply*. I used to tell him I thought the artist had better leave *the whole* to the imagination! Bonnington not only advised *me* to marry, but made me his confidant with reference to his own love-projects. He should like, he said, a wife with a bit of money, a bit of beauty, and a bit of mind; and I believe the person whom he married was not without 'a bit' of the

two latter recommendations. Bonnington had a boat; and once when I visited Nottingham, he along with Mr. Rhodes, myself, and another gentleman, embarked in it, to sail down the Trent to the village of Burton. The first part of our course was along the canal; and I never can forget my sensations while rocking in the boat, as it sunk in the deep lock by which we found an outlet into the river—the strong gates before and behind, and the high slimy walls on each side, with a square patch of sky above! When we got fairly into the stream, although the wind blew strong, our captain hoisted a sail, which he managed so badly that I, who who had no taste to be drowned, even in the poetical Trent, leaped out of the boat as it drove against the bank, and was followed by Mr. Rhodes, who brought with him a gun. As we walked along the meadows there was a skylark singing aloft before us: ‘Shall I shoot him?’ said Mr. Rhodes. ‘Yes,’ was my thoughtless reply—not for one moment supposing that he could or would do anything of the sort. He fired; and to my grief and mortification, no less than to my surprise, the poor thing fell dead! I never fired a gun myself, and I believe that was the first and last time I was ever in any similar manner accessory to taking away the life of a bird.” *Holland*: “What became of Bonnington?” *Montgomery*: “He got in some way or other concerned in the unlawful exportation of machinery; and was induced, pending the consequences of a discovery of the transaction, to export himself.”

At this period preparations were making to celebrate the marriage of Queen Victoria to Albert, Prince of Saxe Gotha, by various rejoicings in most of the towns and villages in the kingdom. A party in Sheffield having determined to get up a soir  e at the Cutlers’ Hall, invited Montgomery to preside on the occa-

sion, with which request he at once good-naturedly complied. On the evening of February 10th the meeting was held; about 350 persons were present; and after tea, the poet, as chairman, addressed the audience at considerable length; and after a quotation from Spenser's "Epithalamion," thus concluded:—

"I hold in my hand another copy of verses, which may not be out of place at this time. It is not necessary to give the writer's name, nor to say whether they were composed for the royal espousals or not. I may, however, state that they express my own fervent wishes and prayers for the happiness, here and hereafter, of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert; and, moreover, I trust that the whole of the company present will join in the same aspirations.

" 'Ocean and land the globe divide,' &c. \*

The company, on receiving a hint, now rose unanimously, and joined with great heartiness in singing "God save the Queen," at the conclusion of which, the chairman remarked with great animation,— "I desired you to do well; you have done better. When Burke had seen the Queen of France in her beauty, he said ten thousand swords would leap from their scabbards to avenge a look of indignity offered to her; but the Queen of England's safeguard is tens of millions of hearts."

*James Montgomery to the Rev. Robert Wood.*

"The Mount, Sheffield, Feb. 17. 1840.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"If I could have said *No* at once to your invitation, I would have done so—with my hand, though not with my heart. I have had a hard struggle with myself since your letter arrived; the issue has been, I delayed to answer it immediately. . . . During the last eight months I have had repeated warnings, in various forms of indisposition, which

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\* Works, p. 360.



have prostrated me for a few days at a time, that the earthly house of this tabernacle is falling fast into decay, and that I ought to live every moment prepared to leave it, as a tenant-at-will, from breath to breath, under Him who is the Lord of both being and well-being, in time and to eternity. My memory, in particular,—which, indeed, was never rightly broken in by discipline,—becomes less and less serviceable for oral exercises, though for general mental purposes I have yet sufficient command over the incongruous multiplicity of what has rather been heaped up than stored in it through nearly threescore years and ten. When I am musing, if the fire happens to burn, I can then speak with my tongue; but a cold address I cannot make, whatever be my previous preparation, under any artificial excitement. This almost totally incapacitates me from performing with any satisfaction to myself such duties as are required on missionary platforms. But my whole letter will be rhapsody unless I cut the Gordian knot of *Yes* or *No* with a stroke of my pen. *Yes*, then, my dear friend, if the Lord please; and O may I do that which pleases Him, and nothing more nor less! If the Lord please I will be with you on the 8th of April, and then let Him do with me or by me what seemeth to Him good.

“With regard to your second application, poor as I am in any scraps of unpublished rhyme, and pledged as I am at the same time to compositions for other purposes, I must at once decline by saying I cannot furnish anything suitable. If for a Christian purpose, and a hymn or two would be likely to procure your friends a pound or two, they shall be welcome to my best. I must end here. I said only a day or two before your letter arrived, to Mr. John Holland here, ‘I wonder how my friend Mr. Robert Wood is going on at Huddersfield. I have neither heard of him nor from him since I saw him at Manchester this time two years ago. I fear I have displeased him.’ I had some misgiving that the manner in which I declined your overture to let a certain artist at Manchester paint my portrait for you, had been deemed an act of perversity on my part. The kindness of



your letter relieved me from this imaginary dilemma. I rejoice to hear the good tidings concerning your dear young people. I must not turn over this leaf, my time being gone. My best and most grateful remembrance to Mrs. Wood, and believe me what I am, and ever hope to be,

“ Your obliged friend,

“ J. MONTGOMERY.”

A little incident, very illustrative of Montgomery's conscientiousness, may be mentioned.<sup>3</sup> Mr. Leach, treasurer of the “ London Association in aid of the Brethren's Missions,”\* wrote, requesting him to attend a public meeting at Birmingham. In reply, March 7th, he says, “ I am sorry to say that I have not the heart to undertake the journey to Birmingham, . . . and must therefore earnestly entreat you to forgive me for declining this engagement.” He felt, however, that should the cause at all suffer through lack of his services, he should not forgive himself: accordingly next morning he revoked his hasty decision in a letter commencing thus:—“ My dear Friend,—Read Matthew xxi. 28—31. This parable has pressed so hard upon me since I wrote my perverse note yesterday evening, in answer to yours.

\* William Leach, Esq., who held an office of great importance and responsibility in the India House, had taken so active a part in the management of the above-named institution from its origin in 1818, that in 1853 his portrait, painted by Sir W. Ross, was presented to his family by the congregations of the Brethren, whose secretary, the Rev. P. La Trobe, in a letter accompanying the testimonial, says, “ If we might refer to any of your efforts of Christian love as peculiarly deserving of thankful acknowledgment, we should be disposed to select that which issued in the renewal of the Mission to Tobago in the year 1827, an effort which, so long as that work of God is permitted to endure, will keep the name of William Leach inseparably associated with that of James Montgomery.”

proposing a missionary visit to Birmingham instead of Manchester, that, to deliver my conscience, I will endeavour to go to the former place. . . . You see my weakness, not to call it by a harsher name: pray for me, that I may have more faith and patience to employ the little strength yet left me."

*James Montgomery to John Blackwell.*

"The Mount, Sheffield, March 18. 1840.

"DEAR FRIEND,

"Accept my best thanks for the kindness of your letter,—but I have neither hope nor heart to avail myself of the friendly invitation to attend the annual meeting of your Aged Female Society. I am very glad that that amiable and benevolent institution has not itself died of old age before it reached its fourth year: may it live as many centuries, and outlive three times as many generations, both of its patrons and its beneficiaries! We may not pray for the dead, but we may for the unborn; and therefore as 'the poor shall never cease out of the land,' and old women will always be found among the poorest of the poor, I venture thus to pray for the permanency and the prosperity of your Newcastle charity towards them. Ours in Sheffield will probably soon lose its earliest and its ablest supporter. Mr. Roberts, of Park Grange, is dangerously ill; upwards of a month he has been laid upon a bed of sickness, from which there seems no prospect of his being removed, except to the resting-place for the worn-out body, and the abode in eternity of the spirit that cannot die. O what a life of activity, benevolence, restlessness, yet perseverance in the pursuit of every object which he once marked for accomplishment, will be ended when he is no more an inhabitant of this world! I know him better, I believe, than any other human being has had the opportunity of knowing him in the recesses of his mind,—a mind of no ordinary intelligence and inexhaustible resources; and had these always been judiciously employed, he would

have been one of the most useful, if not one of the most illustrious men of his generation. To him I am indebted for your friendship, for he was the first negotiator between us that led to my deliverance from the burthen of the 'Iris,' and which to you, in the course of a bountiful Providence, was the introduction to a course of temporal prosperity and public usefulness which I am glad to learn has, in the lapse of a few years, enabled you, in the midst of health and strength, to be willing to disentangle yourself from some of your heavy duties, and enjoy and improve your latter days. May those days be your best and your happiest; and may you grow as old as the oldest of your old women amidst your family, following in your steps of honest and honourable service to your neighbours and your countrymen; but especially in so far as you have been a cross-bearing disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ! Mr. John Holland desires to be remembered with respect to all his Newcastle friends. Miss Sarah Gales will write a few lines on the other side.

"I am very truly your friend,

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"John Blackwell, Esq., Newcastle-upon-Tyne."

*James Montgomery to George Bennet.*

"The Mount, Sheffield, March 25. 1840.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"The penny post puts me to so much expense of pen, ink, and paper, whatever it may save me in cash,—which will not prevent me from getting into the Gazette a day longer than under the old tax,—that I am forced to cut my answers as short as possible, and confine myself strictly to business matters, except on spring-tide occasions, when the heart overflows, and the hand is carried away by it. At present I must keep within high-water mark. It is very hard to make oneself understood in public speaking, beyond the moment that the words enter into the ear, and the thoughts flash by reflection through the mind of the hearer, as glances of lightning, not the lightning itself, vanish rather than ap-

pear before our eyes, in the turbulence of a thunder-storm. I am a Scotchman, because I was born in Scotland, at Irvine, in Ayrshire; I ought to have been an Irishman, because both my parents were such; and I pass for an Englishman, because I was caught young, and imported hither before I was six years old, and have never since seen my native country, except for a minute or two, in the semblance of a dim wreath of haze on the verge of the horizon, from the top of Helvellyn, in June, 1828, and a few days afterwards from the peak of Skiddaw, when I was commemorating on a fragment of slate, which I picked from a heap of the same, the intelligence just received by me at Keswick of your welcome landing in England after your eight years' travel. What I said at the Hibernian meeting was nearly this,—‘If I did not love Ireland fervently, I should be a most unnatural and ungrateful wretch; every drop of blood in my veins was derived from Irish fountains; both my parents were Irish, and the first motion of my heart was communicated by the pulse of an Irish mother’s. I recollect something of schools in that country,—I will not say how far back in the last century,—having been a humble pupil in one which was kept by Neddy M’Kaffery, formerly a Popish priest, but who having learned the gospel better than it is taught in the church to which he belonged by birth, became a good Moravian brother, and lived and died in a purer faith than he had once professed.’ This was all that I said in reference to my childhood, parentage, and education to the time of my leaving Ireland, where I had lived a year and a half, between my residence in Scotland, my native, and removal to England, my adopted, or rather adopting country. One point more of your late letters I have to acknowledge. Farr’s metrical version of the Psalms I have; the author has been a correspondent occasionally of mine for several years past, and sent me the work as soon as it was published. He is a worthy young man, with respectable talents, which I believe he sincerely desires to consecrate to themes of the highest importance. I heartily wish him success, and shall be glad if your Tract Society can give him occasional employment. I thank you

for mentioning his Psalms, which shows that you do not forget to interest yourself in our friend Holland's scheme.

"I am truly your friend,

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"George Bennet, Esq., Grove Place, Hackney."

On the 27th of April Montgomery delivered a lecture before a respectable audience composed of the members of the Sheffield Literary and Philosophical Society, and their friends,—a lecture on the "Imperfectness of the Materials of History:" it was founded on the essay bearing a similar title, to which reference has been made under the year 1837. The reading was listened to with evident delight and interest, particularly the passage from Hazlitt\* and some others, in which the speaker introduced certain mistakes made by writers concerning himself, with delicacy and effect. The poet, calling upon one of the biographers the day after the lecture, it was naturally adverted to. *Holland*: "Every person appeared much pleased with your lecture last night; but I think you hardly allowed sufficient advantage to one important consideration, namely, that the historians of former times were probably rather, not to say much, less exposed to errors arising from some of the causes to which you alluded, than modern writers are; and that on several accounts. In the first place, the facts committed to record by the ancients appear, generally speaking, to have been those of a more prominent character, concerning the nature and occurrence of which there would be less likelihood of mistake than, *ceteris paribus*, there must be where the transactions recorded are of a more inconsiderable, obscure, or detailed description: in the second place, I think it might be said that the old his-

\* Vol. I. p. 220.



torians were rather less likely to find their duties as relators of facts interfered with by mixed motives, than may be the case with modern authors : and, lastly, the memory, as more depended on, must have been more trustworthy than it is in our times. I know you may sneer at my insinuation that, in this respect, ‘the former days were better than these.’” *Montgomery* : “I never do *sneer* (drawing his face into the most comical expression of agreement with the term) at anything. I agree with you to some extent ; but however conspicuous the events recorded, and however exalted the office and character of the historian, there existed, at least, as probable grounds for the imperfectness of the evidence for what he wrote in ancient times, as in our own. Cæsar, like our Duke of Wellington, appears to have been above the temptation to state anything but what was strictly true in what he has left on record concerning his own campaigns ; but there are many things in Tacitus and Sallust, for instance, which these writers must either have introduced supposititiously, or they must have been misled by their own incredulity and the imperfectness of their authorities.” *Holland* : “I could hardly help fearing that the tendency of the lecture would be to unhinge confidence in the credibility of history.” *Montgomery* : “No : the legitimate moral to be deduced from it is the supreme importance of *truth*, even in the smallest matters.”

*James Montgomery to George Bennet.*

“The Mount, May 8. 1840.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,

“This is the fourth day on which I have been busily employed in despatching arrears of correspondence accumulated (thanks to the penny post) to a formidable amount



upon my hands, and taxing my mind more than it will afford to bear, to answer with the courtesy due to so much intended kindness shown to me principally by strangers. I break off, however, for a few moments to save to-day's post, that I may acknowledge several welcome remembrance-tokens from you in the way of telegraphic communications from soul to soul, through the dark tunnel of the post-office, which conveys the invisible thoughts in their sealed envelopes \* from London to Sheffield, and the reverse, almost as quickly as letters used to be transmitted between this place and Rotherham. . . . Our old friend, Mr. Roberts — who is yet our friend in the body — is apparently recovering so much of health and strength as to justify the hope that he may yet be spared some years to do good and to get good. On Tuesday I paid a visit to him at The Grange, and was the first person except his family, the doctor, and his faithful servant (like a second *Thomas* to another *Rowland* † as a nurse), who had been allowed to see him for nearly three months. Thinner, of course, he was, and feebler, but full of lively spirit, and yet meekened and softened in a manner that touched me to the quick, and endeared him to me more than ever. . . . Every day he rides out four, five, or six miles ; and enjoys the sun, the air, the earth, the sky, and all the beauties and amenities of this delightful season, as though he were himself coming out into blossom like the flowers, and into song like the birds, on the genial return of spring. . . . The turning point of his disease seemed to occur on the Saturday before Easter. He said then, To-day I am seventy-seven years old ; — and yesterday my Saviour died for me !' Oh, my dear friend, though you do not [being a

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\* Montgomery never used envelopes, but always folded up his letter-sheet in the old fashion ; not so his present correspondent, who often startled his friends with notes charged double postage, under the heavy rates of the old system.

† Rowland Hodgson, whose trusty valet is deservedly remembered in Montgomery's letter.

Dissenter] call a certain day *Good Friday*, you love to remember on that and every other of the three hundred and sixty-five that wonderful event (which the annals of the whole creation cannot parallel) which so many Christians commemorate on that day; and I know that the most cheering, animating, glorious, heart-breaking, heart-healing reflection that can come upon you at any time, in any circumstances, is the thought of our suffering friend Roberts\*, when you with him can say, ‘My Saviour died for me!’ He did, He did; and He died for me too; then let us live to Him, — live wholly to Him, that when we die, — as soon we must, — we may die unto the Lord, that where He is we may thenceforth ever be. . . . A word about business: if it be indeed concluded that something like justice shall be done at the last to the Journal of your Voyages and Travels, I am ready to begin my work immediately; it will neither be long nor hard. . . . Alas! for *us* — the removal of Mr. Williams: I cannot say alas! for *him*. But his death, like Samson’s (in the reverse of the nature of its issue), must surely be the means of more life, faith, zeal, and labour in the missionary cause than has yet been shown.

“Ever your friend,

“J. MONTGOMERY.

“George Bennet, Esq., Grove Place, Hackney.”

On the 12th of May, the day after he had presided at a religious meeting, Montgomery called upon Mr. Holland, and half sadly, half pleasantly, said, “You see I *am* alive after last night’s exertion; I sat on the plat-

\* In a long letter to Mr. Bennet, dated on the 10th day of March, Montgomery said: “I had considerable symptoms of erysipelas in my legs, which happily were allowed to take their own course downwards, instead of being driven upwards by repulsive or expulsive medicines, or applications of fuel to fire to abate the flame. Our dear and ever-to-be-esteemed friend R. has been more hardly dealt with by this incendiary disease; his face, head, and neck being rapidly overrun by the conflagration, for such it may be called.”

form in great suffering all the time after I had spoken : I must get off to Ockbrook for a little rest, or you'll kill me among you outright." *Holland* : " I wish, sir, you would be persuaded to leave the harassing conflict about the ventilation of the fever-wards to others."

*Montgomery* : " There's nobody else who will attend to the business ; and if it be neglected or mismanaged, the public will hold me responsible." Mr. Holland placed in his hand Bulkeley's poem of the " Last Day," which had been obtained from London for him as he wanted to see the plan of it. *Montgomery* : " I have received a parcel of manuscript as big as this volume, from a young man seventeen years of age, who has paid 2s. 7d. postage upon it ; he asks my advice how he may publish it so as to raise money enough to pay his passage to Van Diemen's Land ! It is not all together worth even that poor fire "—pointing to a handful of cinders in the grate. *Holland* : " What will you do with it ? " *Montgomery* : " What *can* I do, but send it back, and pay the postage as the author has done ? I cannot say anything harsh to him, though I cannot praise his poetry : I was once seventeen myself ; and I remember my own poetical aspirations at that period ; but," he added, in a lower tone, " amidst much that was feeble or absurd, there certainly must have been some indication of better things." His tenderness to the claims even of the poorest versifiers, so often and sometimes so inopportunately sought, was always remarkable. At the very moment while he was making the foregoing remarks, he held in his hand a subscription list at the head of which he had placed the name of several friends along with his own as donors of a guinea each, to assist a poor but worthy townswoman who had claimed his commiseration on account of her rhymes and her necessities !

May 16. Montgomery, accompanied by an artist, called upon Mr. Holland, and placed in his hand the following note, written to have been left behind him if the parties had not met:—

“DEAR FRIEND,

“As I cannot call again, pray come up to The Mount to tea this afternoon at six o’clock, and bring the newspaper with you. Mr. Pickering will be with us, but nobody else.

“Truly your friend,

“J. MONTGOMERY.

“Saturday, noon.”

Mr. Holland accordingly went to The Mount, when, tea being over, Montgomery told his friend that he wished him to see three pictures, which only that afternoon had been finished by Mr. Pickering: these were likenesses of the poet himself, of Miss Gales, and a small copy of the “Incognita,” — the first and last intended to be engraved for the edition of his works then in course of preparation. It was evident that Montgomery had made up his mind to be pleased with the artist, who had spared neither time nor pains to get a likeness; nor was the general expression of the face unsatisfactory. On the remark being made that the mouth and chin were, perhaps, on the whole, the least successfully caught — “Aye,” he replied, “those portions are the *terra incognita australis* of my face — none of the painters have successfully made them out.” The most obvious discrepancy, however, between the likeness and the original appeared to be that the former conveyed the idea of a younger and better conditioned man than the shrunken appearance of the latter, at the time, altogether justified. On the biographer saying jocularly that the portrait of Miss Gales would serve as a frontispiece to the third volume — “Yes,”

said the poet, "it would, if you can prove that I ever addressed any verses to her: it is, however, a good likeness, but Sarah should have been painted twenty years ago; she had then quite a Madonna face." No remark could possibly have conveyed an idea less in accordance with the picture.

On the 30th of May Montgomery went to Ockbrook to spend a few days with his brother. He stayed there a fortnight, enjoying the delights of privacy, the company of his relatives, the worship of the Moravians, and the sweets of the country. "When he was with us at Ockbrook, in spring or summer," says his niece Harriet, "he frequently took long rambles alone, when he never failed to bring me a large bouquet of wild flowers, and, whenever he could find them, long wreaths of black bryony, of which he knew I was particularly fond, associating with it some silly fancies of my own. But I especially used to notice how he discovered the *beautiful* in everything, however common the apparent character of the natural object. 'A yellow primrose was to *him*,' a great deal 'more' than to others,—it was a world of pleasure, at least so he made it to *me*." From Ockbrook he went one day to Derby, to hear the Rev. H. M'Neile at a Protestant Meeting: not wishing to take any part, or indeed to make himself known, he kept clear of the platform, and took his place as quietly as possible, and, as he thought, unnoticed, amongst the audience. He was, however, a little discomposed next morning to find that his presence had not only been noticed, but his name "used up" by an adroit reporter of one of the Derby papers, who, after mentioning who were on the platform, particularised our poet as a part of the audience! His principal poetical exercises while at Ockbrook were the reducing of a few of the Psalms into metre; in-



cluding the twenty-fourth, in the rendering of which he appeared to think he had been particularly successful.\*

*James Montgomery to George Bennet.*

“The Mount, May 29. 1840.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,

“As I am at length able to break away, locally at least, from my present and late perplexities in reference to two great public concerns, in which I have to struggle almost alone, and go to take breath at Ockbrook, near Derby, in my brother’s family, I write this hasty note to say that if you have occasion to correspond with me during the next fortnight, please to address me as above, at the Rev. Ignatius Montgomery’s. I duly received your packet inclosing the *remarks on the tides* about the Society Islands. This is a very *important document*, and must form a *distinct article* in the *introductory matters* to the forthcoming edition of the ‘*Voyages and Travels.*’ *There is another*, of which I beg you to get early possession, namely *the original record of the plan and purpose of the Missionary Society*, with the signatures of the *venerable fathers of the same attached, inscribed by their own hands*, now mouldering in the dust — except (I believe) our honoured friend, *Mr. Boden*, yet among the living, and among the loving, too, of that great and glorious cause. I saw this at the Mission House, soon after the publication of the original edition of the ‘*Voyages,*’ &c., and bespoke it of the Secretary for the use of the expected *second* edition — which never came out as it ought to have done. Mr. Ellis, perhaps, may have laid an embargo on this for his proposed History of the Society; but I think *we have the first claim to it*, and if you can succeed in obtaining it, I would have it *lithographed* and it will be a precious appendage to the *new edition.*” The

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\* Printed in “Songs of Zion.”

† Montgomery says, in a letter to Mr. Bennet, Nov. 11. 1842, “I hope you will get the *whole of the missionary document, not the autographs only, lithographed.* Nothing connected with this publi-



plates, also, must be obtained — I should hope at a reasonable expense ; as they were *not* the property of the publishers, but, *by my own express stipulation*, to be *the joint* property of them and the Missionary Society. . . . I am carefully running through the sheets, and marking passages which may be abridged or omitted ; but these, in the early chapters at least, are few and small. I shall not reduce the whole more than *one-fifth*, probably less ; but I must go repeatedly through the text. Of this, however, I can furnish from 200 to 300 pages as early as may be desired by the new undertaker, and the press shall not have to stand still for the remainder. I propose to include, besides your remarks on the tides, my verses addressed to you on your departure, and a couple of stanzas composed for a memorial tablet of Mr. Tyerman, at the request of his congregation in the south ; also an enlarged preface, &c. Would it be practicable to obtain anything like an accurate map of the Pacific, including the Society and Sandwich Islands, and those latterly visited and evangelised by our sainted Williams and others ? Consider of this.

“ I am, truly, your affectionate friend,

“ J. MONTGOMERY.

“ George Bennet, Esq., Grove Place, Hackney.”

Several letters passed between Montgomery and Mr. Bennet, at this time, relating mainly to the republication of the “ Missionary Voyages and Travels ” in a condensed and economical form. This project occasioned some anxiety to both parties, arising, as it would seem, from the fact that while, on the one hand, the original patrons of the enterprise itself did not zealously promote the sale of this account of its progress and success, the work does not appear to have been offered

cation has given me half the pleasure which the discovery of this precious relic has done : thank you for persevering in the search. The use of this document was, however, ultimately refused by the directors.

at once to any publisher in such a way as to induce him to take it up heartily as a private speculation. Questions also arose as to the proprietorship and price of the plates which had been used for the first edition, and which were considered indispensable to the success of the second. Arrangements were ultimately made with Mr. Snow, of Paternoster Row, for the publication of the substance of the two original volumes in one, the whole to be overseen by Montgomery, who, on the 13th of June, 1840, thus addresses Mr. Bennet on the subject, from Ockbrook :—

“ The whole of the revised copy of the *first* volume of the Journal is now ready, excepting the preliminary articles, which I shall reserve till the body of the work is finished for the printer’s hands. I have found the task of abridgment much more difficult than I imagined \*, and have gone over again and again the copy, to select paragraphs which might be spared without breaking the connected narrative or omitting circumstances of missionary importance, facts of natural history, or curious records of a form of past society in its inveterate state, as it had endured for ages, or in its transition state from barbarism to civilisation, and from idolatry to the faith of the gospel. I have used all the pains, diligence, and judgment that I can bring to bear upon the business ; and I hope, on the whole, without much marring or mutilating what was itself a condensed digest of an immense mass of materials. On going over it, and recollecting the documents of all kinds, and many of them exceedingly crude, from which the work was compiled, I almost wonder how I found strength or perseverance to accomplish it ; but I gave my heart and mind, as well as my hand to it ; and if

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\* This difficulty must almost necessarily be encountered by an author who is required to abridge a work of his own, in a much greater degree than it would be felt by any other person engaged in the same task.

ever I presented to the world anything worth reading and preserving, it was these volumes, — neglected as they have been, till, now, we may expect to be coolly told that they are obsolete or antiquated. They ought to be neither ; for there is matter in them that is as interesting at this day, and will be for an age to come, as it was ten years ago. Be this as it may, I was glad to find that I myself could be pleased with the re-perusal, after having laid them so long by, and having seen them treated by others as though all my labour, and, what was a thousand times of more importance, all your services and sacrifices had been in vain. . . . I return home on Friday, if all be well, having spent a pleasant fortnight here. Lady Lifford, of Ross Trevor, Ireland, is at present a visitor in this quiet village, where she has some relatives, and has been sojourning here a few weeks. She is a venerable and exceedingly amiable Christian lady, in her eightieth year. She informed me this morning that you had been in the neighbourhood several years ago, and that she had been so agreeably impressed by your conversation that she regretted you could not spend a longer time there. She desired to be remembered to you."

The second volume of the Journal, as marked for the printer, was transmitted to Mr. Bennet on the 14th of July ; and, in reply to a letter from that gentleman, the compiler thus writes :—

" If you deem it absolutely necessary that woodcuts of the animals which you have sketched should be introduced, let it be done ; but you are probably not aware of the difficulty, delay, disappointment, and cost which this will involve. I cannot recommend this ; and I would have nothing to do with Kotzebue's blundering topography, any further than verbal allusion to it : his slanders of the missionaries and his lying statements of transactions connected with the history of their labours, also his absurd assertion respecting the tides, are all sufficiently exposed and refuted in the general introduction.

## CHAP. LXXXIV.

1840.

REV. PETER LATROBE. — VISIT TO RAITHBY HALL. — QUEEN ADELAIDE.  
 — DOUBLE RAINBOW. — SIR SAMUEL ROMILLY. — LOCAL POLITICAL  
 MEETING. — SONNET. — INTERVIEW WITH MRS. SIGOURNEY. — LINES  
 TO THE ASHANTEE PRINCES. — DELIVERS LECTURES ON THE POETS  
 AT HULL. — ANDREW MARVELL. — RIMIUS AND THE MORAVIANS. —  
 REV. R. A. WILLMOT. — A RELIC.

THE Rev. Peter Latrobe having in a letter referred to the recent loss of his wife, and his consequent loneliness and depression of spirits, at the same time hinting how grateful any expression of the poet's sympathy in verse would be to him, Montgomery in his reply, dated July 2., after adverting to some appropriate topics of religious consolation, says:—

“ I must tear my pen away from this strain, and just add, that though I can promise nothing in reply to the marginal note alluded to and its precious burthen, yet should I be so happy as to light upon a thought that will, without torturing into absurdity to avoid commonplace, allow me to express it in three or four couplets or stanzas, I shall be glad to send it to you, as a token of my sincerity of good will, to gratify you if possible, by doing what I never attempt without extreme reluctance, and rarely execute without much labour in vain. You must be well aware, that such themes in every age since death and verse existed,—the latter to give life to the former, or rather to perpetuate by recording it,—have been hackneyed till almost every form of sentiment suggested on an occasion occurring every instant

throughout this mortal world is exhausted ; and scarcely a new turn even of expression can be invented which will not remind the reader of something which he had met with before, ten times better conceived and as much better conveyed.”\*

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\* The poet did afterwards transmit the following verses to the Rev. Peter Latrobe :—

- “ All human love is love divine ;  
 For none will bear the sacred name  
 Which is not kindled at the shrine  
 Of heavenly love’s undying flame ;  
 Still such on earth to thee is mine,  
 Wife of my bosom ! what is thine ?
- “ We love the living, when we trace  
 The spirit looking from its throne ;  
 The eye,—the glory of the face,  
 And hear the heart in every tone,  
 When voice with voice, and eye with eye,  
 Hold converse,—question and reply.
- “ We love the dead, when but a form  
 Of that which moved and breathed is left,  
 The wreck of life in that last storm  
 Which us of our best part bereft ;  
 How sad, sweet, strange, yet dear the sight  
 Of the clay-lamp, when quenched the light !
- “ Such once our fellowship hath been,  
 Bereavement now is mine alone ;  
 The veil which death hath drawn between  
 Us and the joys that we have known,  
 To thee is glory,—but to me,  
 ’T is darkness, silence, mystery.
- “ Yet through that glory, I believe  
 Thy soul may look on things below,  
 May hear me sigh and see me grieve ;  
 Nay, touched with memory of woe,  
 Once felt, but now for ever fled,  
 May shed such tears as angels shed.

But Mr. Latrobe's letter had reference to a project of more importance to the church of which he was so highly esteemed a minister, and one which required more anxious consideration on the part of his correspondent than an elegiac composition,—namely, a tour into Scotland in behalf of the Brethren's missions.

“I am sorry,” says Montgomery, “that I cannot at present venture to promise, even conditionally, an early compliance with your suggestion. In connection with three great public institutions, being chairman of each, and much trouble, strife, and hostility being occasionally manifested,—and at

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“Not tears of wormwood and of gall,  
But drops of sympathy, so pure,  
While on my wounded breast they fall,  
They soothe the pangs they cannot cure;  
With silent comfort from above,  
Descending in a shower of love.

“Methinks I feel them now distil,  
Like dews, on my heart's wilderness,  
With flowers of hope the void to fill,  
With fruits of joy the soil to bless;  
It must, it must be so! we meet  
This moment in communion sweet.

“'Tis gone! 't was but a lightning glance  
Into eternity, to show  
What now is thine inheritance,  
And shall be mine, when hence I go,  
If He, through whom by faith I stand,  
Uphold me still with his right hand.

“Lord Jesus Christ, whose love can bind  
Human affections into one;  
One heart, one soul, one hope, one mind;  
May *our* past love be love begun,  
Continued, cherished, kept by Thee  
Through time, life, death, eternity!”



this time peculiarly trying to my patience and harassing to my spirit,—there are proceedings in course, which will require my utmost exercise of self-denial and resolution to maintain what I deem the right way of management, and from which I cannot recede without peril to the welfare of a most afflicted portion of my neighbours in two of the instances (the Infirmary and House of Recovery for Fever Patients), and in the third, great damage to the property of no small number of proprietors (many of them widows and fatherless children) in a joint-stock company once prosperous beyond precedent.”

About the middle of August, the venerable relict of Robert Carr Brackenbury, Esq., of Raithby Hall in Lincolnshire, accompanied her seasonable present of game to the poet with so pressing an invitation, that he paid her a visit of ten days, during which he was equally pleased with the entertainment of his kind hostess, and with excursions to Mablethorpe and other places on the adjacent coast.

During his homeward ride from Raithby to Louth, and surrounded as he was by the rich cornfields already ripe for the sickle in that fertile part of the county of Lincoln, he composed the stanzas commencing, “The God of Harvest praise,”\* which he transcribed and gave to Mr. Holland, saying at the same time, “You may do what you like with them.” The hint was well understood; and the author’s townsmen had the pleasure of reading this beautiful “Harvest Hymn” the next day in the “Sheffield Mercury.” *Holland*: “You see, sir, Wordsworth has just been complimented by a visit from Queen Adelaide; what think you of such a distinction for a poet, and in these times too?” *Montgomery*: “I think the Queen Dowager has done him great honour, and done herself honour too. I should

\* Original Hymns, CCLXXIX.

like to have witnessed his interview with the illustrious visitor." *Holland*: "And I should like to know what *you* would have done, had Her Majesty announced her intention of calling upon you some morning at The Mount." *Montgomery*: "I should have done as Wordsworth no doubt did under the circumstances—the best I could. I believe I had once a narrow escape from being summoned to wait upon Her Majesty when she was Queen-consort. After I had read my six lectures at the Royal Institution, I was told that some of the ladies of the Court, who happened to hear them, had mentioned the subject to the Queen, before whom, it was surmised, I might possibly be called upon to read." *Holland*: "Did you not feel some nervous trepidation at the prospect of such an audience as you might have had?" *Montgomery*: "No; I was aware my lectures contained several religious allusions, not perhaps exactly adapted to the taste of courtiers; but I had a high opinion of the Queen in this respect; and besides, I knew there would be about her some good women, such as Lady Brownlow, who had heard the lectures." The reading, however, did not take place; and perhaps the anticipation of it had been mentioned to the poet, as he seemed to think, on very slight grounds: the subject is introduced to show that Montgomery, habitually timid and diffident as he was, could have summoned a sufficient resolution to have encountered an experiment the most trying to nerves of such intense susceptibility as his own.

George Bennet, Esq., being on a visit at Sheffield, it was arranged that he, the poet, and Mr. Holland should have a ramble on the afternoon of the 5th of September. The three friends accordingly dined together, and afterwards set out in the direction of Grey Stones, and from thence by Whitely Wood, Stumperlow Hall,

and through Hallam back to The Mount, a circuit of several miles. The weather was exceedingly fine, the roads in good condition, and the ramble, in every respect, a most delightful one. The harvest was just at its height; and once and again did Montgomery come to a full stop in admiration of the general beauty of the scenery, or of some particular portion of it, and to which he called the attention of his companions.

Sept. 23. *Montgomery*: "I have this day seen—what it is worth while to have seen once in one's life—a most perfect and beautiful *double rainbow*. I had only before seen fragments of a second arch, more or less intense in colour; but in this instance, the upper or extraordinary iris was complete throughout, and, as well as the primary span, was of remarkable brilliancy: 'twas almost enough to have inspired a poem." *Holland*: "You know, sir, Campbell and I have taken the rainbow in poetical charge: besides, according to the editor of the 'Watchman' newspaper, *your 'Iris'* had faded—hear this paragraph: "*Fuit Ilium!* Time was, when the 'Sheffield Iris' was under Christian management of the most unexceptionable character, and when *the bow* irradiated the cloud as much as the cloud now bedims its radiance."\* *Montgomery*: "That is Humphrey Sandwith's doing, then, I suppose: I once met him at Hull, as I think I have told you: he very kindly drove me to Flamborough Head, and recited to me, on our way there and back, several passages from Michael Sadler's unpublished epic poem of 'Alfred.'"

Oct. Montgomery was reading the "Life of Sir Samuel Romilly." "I feel," said he, "an undefinable interest in the character of Sir Samuel: I regard him as the

\* "Watchman," Sept. 17. 1840. The passage is from an article animadverting on a description of a *Sunday* railway excursion, which had appeared in the "Sheffield Iris."

purest-minded man, leaving religion out of the account, that I ever met with : but with the clearest intellect, the most unsullied virtues, and a thoroughly disinterested devotion to the public good, there does not appear to have been in his soul a single spark of evangelical Christianity. And that fine mind, after all, failed : what frail creatures we are ! Look at poor Southey yonder,—lying in mental ruin : it makes one's spirit shrink to contemplate this decay of such exquisite and noble faculties." *Holland* : " Did you ever see Sir Samue Romilly ? " *Montgomery* : " I once saw him in the Court of King's Bench, the lawyers and he snapping at each other as you and I sometimes do."

An ingenious attempt was made to involve him in the vortex of party strife, which at this time agitated the town of Sheffield, on the subject of a municipal corporation. The editor of one of the local newspapers, who was strongly in favour of a corporation,—which Montgomery was *not*, — in order, as he thought, to inveigle the poet, whose opinions had never been divulged on the subject, published the following appeal : —

" We ask where is the *town's party* ? Have the people of Sheffield no resource but in party men ? We look around us, and we see one man unmixed with any party, but whom all parties equally respect for his talents and his virtues. He is not an untried man. During a long and active life, ' times many and oft,' he has served his townsmen faithfully and well. Frequently has he avowed himself the servant of the public. Nor is it a vain profession. Whenever humanity has needed relief, or religion an advocate, or intelligence a friend, or the good of the town a champion,—he has been ready ; and at greater sacrifice of feeling and of comfort than any other man has made, he has laboured for the public benefit. Who asks his name ? none ; all know that we refer to the humble, the able, the distinguished JAMES MONTGOMERY. To him

we look. We ask him to stand up and give his advice. What his opinions are on this subject we know not. But this we are sure, that the bard of freedom can never be the advocate of despotism. Of this we are certain, that he must be against the county constabulary system. And we are equally sure that whatever remedy he may advise will be readily listened to by the town. He has never been appealed to on an occasion so important, for no crisis equal to this has before arisen. Probably he can never again serve the town so much as by interposing now. Let him then appear once more from his honoured retirement, and bid the threatening clouds of party strife disperse. Then we have no doubt that a course of action can be agreed upon, that may avoid on the one hand the despotism of the constabulary acts, and on the other the imaginary inconveniences of a municipal corporation.”\*

Montgomery's first resolution, on reading the foregoing paragraph, was to write an explanation of the circumstances under which his name had become so unreasonably mixed up with this question: namely, in consequence of his having simply interposed to prevent the passing of a resolution which he considered disrespectful to the senior magistrate, at a recent meeting of the commissioners of police. On second thought, however, he determined to let the matter pass *sub silentio*; so that although the Master Cutler, while presiding at a large public meeting held to recommend a corporation in Paradise Square, some days afterwards, called upon Montgomery to come forward if he were present, the poet, so far from answering to the challenge thus openly given, was sitting quietly at home, busied with the revision of his works.

Nov. 10. Montgomery called upon Mr. Holland in the afternoon: he was going to the post-office with

\* “Sheffield Independent,” Saturday, Oct. 17. 1840.



the last matter of the new edition of his poems, namely, the preface to the "Prison Amusements." The review of the circumstances of his life, at the period to which those compositions refer, had affected him deeply; and he had evidently felt some difficulty in alluding to the usage which he suffered, and at the same time avoiding, as he was anxious to do, reproaching those who were the instruments of his sufferings. *Montgomery*: "On looking back upon the record of those transactions which were identified with my prosecution, after an interval of forty years, I can scarcely believe that such a state of things actually existed; and I am sure I have, in this preface, said as little as possible that is disrespectful of any party." *Holland*: "And yet it was necessary in adverting to the subject at all, either to show how they acted, and upon what grounds, or to give an enduring advantage to the characters of your prosecutors at the expense of your own." *Montgomery*: "Yes; so I found: but as all the parties concerned are now dead, I was determined that I would not make the circumstance of my having been the longer liver an occasion for saying anything of them to which they could not reply." *Holland*: "Besides, the children of some of them might be made to bear the odium of conduct in which, whatever may be said of it, they were as little concerned as perhaps their fathers might have been, had they been living and acting now. I think Colonel Athorpe left no children?" *Montgomery*: "He had two sons, whose conduct, I am afraid, broke their father's heart; but they are long since dead; and the gentleman who now bears the family name assumed it in lieu of his own. Poor Athorpe! He never mentioned in after life the part he took in prosecuting me, without declaring that it was not voluntary on his part. God forgive him every-



thing else as entirely as I do the part he took against me! If it were lawful to pray for the dead, I would pray for *him* with all my heart!"

Nov. 21. A newspaper was lying on the table, containing a sonnet "On hearing of the Queen's Confinement," and dated "Ambleside." *Montgomery*: "Here, Mr. Holland, read this,—it is *perhaps* Wordsworth's." *Holland*: "I think Wordsworth would hardly have used the maudlin term, *confinement*." *Montgomery*: "I should have thought so too—but read." The following were the lines:—

"Earth hath her pictures bright! a youthful pair  
 Delighted o'er their firstling's cradle bend:  
 Nor dim the colouring, when unconscious there  
 Save of life's joyous breath, smiles Britain's heir:  
 All blessings on the Royal Babe descend,  
 The child safe granted to a nation's prayer!  
 Prayer is the realm's defence, and realms that spend  
 Their joy in praises, Heaven shall still defend!  
 Star of our hope, and of our peace the seal,  
 Who love the public weal thy rising bless!  
 Well may they see a jubilee—that pair  
 Youthful and loved—and well *their* mother press  
 Thee to her heart,—for thee renew the care  
 Paid with the love a grateful people feel."\*

Montgomery had an interview at the Tontine Inn with Mrs. Sigourney, "the Hemans of America," as she was sometimes called. He was most unnecessarily fidgeted in prospect of this meeting; but when it was over, he expressed himself as having been gratified, as well he might be, with the unaffected manners of the amiable poetess, who afterwards mentioned to Mr. Holland the delight she had experienced in seeing and

\* Who did write the above sonnet?

conversing with one whose works she, in common with her countrymen, had so long admired.

“ ——— And sure, high praise  
Is due to him who steadily devotes  
His heaven-given talents to their highest end,  
And ne’er disjoins them from their Maker’s praise.  
Such meed is thine, Montgomery, meek in heart,  
And full of Christian love. We said farewell  
Reluctantly to those, who like tried friends,  
Though newly seen, had marked each fleeting hour  
With deeds of kindness.” †

A few days afterwards the poet sat for a portrait to Mr. Illidge, at the pressing solicitation of the artist.

The following letter is in answer to one containing some expressions of fear relative to the success of the preaching of the gospel under certain circumstances at the moment of its date:—

*James Montgomery to George Bennet.*

“ Sheffield, Oct. 27. 1840.

“ MY DEAR FRIEND,

“ I thank you for your letter. I am almost *not* sorry that the railway train ran away, as that disappointment to *you* realised a hope of mine to hear from you on the subject referred to in your epistle a day sooner than I otherwise might have done. . . . I understand the nature of those gloomy apprehensions concerning the most important work under the sun, which have escaped from your pen in the letter just received; but consider how little we know of what God does among the children of men in grace as well as in providence. But is there one act which man performs under the latter, that *would*, without the knowledge acquired by experience and observation, *give the least hope* that the

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\* Sigourney’s “Pleasant Memories of Pleasant Lands,” 1842.

*effect*, which we now as certainly and as truly expect as the returns of day and night, would follow? All the ploughing, tillage, and sowing of seed-time, so far as we can see or reason upon what we see, amounts just to this,—*the throwing away* of millions of bushels of grain, with the certainty that every unit of the incalculable number will rot in the earth; but we have learnt, by *the revelation of facts* through 6000 years, that which our Saviour so beautifully says of Himself, appealing to that authority under the law of Providence,—‘Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but *if it die it bringeth forth much fruit.*’ So, surely, so it *is* in grace, and if possible in a far more inscrutable manner. I cannot believe, nor can you believe, that the faithful preaching of the gospel can ever be in vain. Paul *must* plant, Apollos *must* water, that God may give the increase, because He has promised that He *will*. No more than the seed which has been cast into the ground since the *last* harvest can fail to produce, in due course, the *next* harvest, can his word return to Him void, where it has been sown by his servants *faithfully*, as I have said above; but to how few can it be said by Him, if He be strict to mark iniquity, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant!’ You see *their shortcomings*, but *his work is perfect*, and his word shall accomplish that whereunto He hath sent it, though we as yet know it not; for ‘it is the glory of God to conceal a thing’ (Prov. xxv. 2.), and there is ‘the hiding of his power’ (Habb. iii. 4.) throughout all his dispensations. I do not know that I shall make you understand my drift; but ‘think of these things,’ and you will find ‘light springing out of darkness’ on that mysterious point, which you have touched upon, and which has led me into all this rhapsody. One thing is clear to ourselves individually, and it is enough amidst our bewilderment concerning God’s ways, which are past finding out, namely, that we must ‘give all diligence to make our own calling and election sure.’

“Your affectionate friend,

“J. MONTGOMERY.

George Bennet, Esq., Grove Place, Hackney.”

Two interesting young men, natives of Western Africa, having come over to this country as protégés of the British government, Montgomery met them and their tutor, the Rev. Thomas Pyne, at the parsonage, Attercliffe. To a request made to the poet at that time, the following letter is an answer:—

*James Montgomery to the Rev. John Blackburn.*

“ The Mount, Nov. 2. 1840.

“ MY DEAR FRIEND,

“ I believe you would think there was some merit, if not in the inclosed verses, yet in my compliance with Mr. Pyne’s request and your recommendation, if I could make you feel how such applications trouble me from their frequency and the pain which obedience or denial equally inflicts upon me, worn and exhausted as I am, both in mind and body, with many cares and perplexities, besides those to which my notoriety as a rhymers exposes me. I laid your letter upon a heap of unanswered ones, undetermined whether to attempt anything or not, but with little hope and no heart for the task. This morning I happened to awake at an inconvenient hour to rise, and, like the sluggard, was meditating a turn on the other side, and a brief round of that luxurious slumber which, like ‘stolen waters,’ is ‘sweet,’ and can only be indulged in at the peril of lying too long, when the Ashantee Princes popped upon me, and the idea expressed in the first couplet of the lines within sprang up in my mind: I lay still and let it grow where it had taken sudden root, till it expanded itself into the form and hue of the humble flower, or weed, or what you please to call it, which I now offer through you to the African Princes, in hope that to them it may be acceptable, while it shows my good will at least to gratify the wish of *their* friend and *yours*, and now I may add *mine*. To him I beg you to present my sincere regards.

“ I am truly your friend,

“ J. MONTGOMERY

“ Rev. J. Blackburn, Attercliffe Parsonage.”

*“ Addressed to two Ashantee Princes.*

“ Princes of Ashantee, this paper brings  
 To you a message from the King of kings ;  
 Remember your Creator in your youth,  
 And He will lead you in the way of truth ;  
 In Jesus Christ his only Son believe,  
 Him as your Saviour in your heart receive ;  
 The Holy Scriptures learn to know and prize,  
 For they will make you to salvation wise,  
 If taught by his good Spirit from above,  
 Their first, last, greatest lesson — God is Love !

· Nov. 2. 1840.”

*James Montgomery to John Holland.*

“ The Mount, Nov. 16. 1840.

“ MY DEAR FRIEND,

“ I forgot, on Saturday, to request you to call occasionally at the post-office for any letters or papers addressed to me. I write in very great haste, on the wing, and soon on the wheel, and then, — indeed I do pray that the Lord may preserve me while I commit myself, I hope, body and soul to his sovereign disposal in time and to eternity. May you and I ever have this true resignation, which I very imperfectly feel ! yet I will hold it fast, though with a feeble hand, which need not, cannot, let go its grasp while I look to Him.

“ I am truly your friend,

“ J. MONTGOMERY.

“ Mr. J. Holland.”

In November he fulfilled a long outstanding engagement to deliver his lectures on the British Poets before the members of the Philosophical Society at Hull.

As one of the names in Montgomery's lecture-roll was that of Andrew Marvell, it was impossible that he



should not advert to the intimate and honourable connection which existed between the patriot-poet and the town of Hull; as well as to the debatable literary claim to certain well-known compositions which had been set up in his behalf by zealous local biographers.

"There are," said the lecturer, "five hymns and paraphrases of psalms, which were published in the 'Spectator,' and attributed to Addison by his friend Tickell, who was himself a contributor to that work, and in the secret of its multifarious authorship. Three, however, of these compositions have been claimed by Captain Edward Thompson as the productions of Andrew Marvell, of whom not Hull only but his whole country has cause to be proud. This claim is made on the following authority:—the Captain says, 'By the attention and friendship of Mr. Thomas Raikes I have been put in possession of a volume of Mr. Marvell's poems, some written with his own hand, and the rest copied by his order. This valuable acquisition was many years in the care of Mr. Nettleton, which serves now (in his own words) to detect the theft and ignorance of some writers.' On the face of it," proceeded the lecturer, "this evidence is defective. There is no voucher that *all* the poems in that collection which were *not* written with his own hand were written by his order. Such manuscript collections of miscellaneous verse by various authors were often made, in those days as well as since, for private gratification. A specimen I have seen of a date corresponding with the foregoing, in which were some of Shakspeare's and Marlow's songs, and a heterogeneous assemblage of fugitive poetry, by authors known and unknown, without the name of one being attached, — the handwriting also being diverse in the progress of the pages. If the book can be produced with even one of these compositions attributed to Addison in Marvell's own handwriting, I will yield the point, and not only surrender the two thus reclaimed for the latter, but I will concede three others to him, which are given in the 'Spectator' as from the same parentage, but do not



seem to have been found in the volume alluded to. That all the five were by one hand will scarcely be questioned by any competent judge of the style and rhythm of the verse. Both of these characteristics correspond with those that distinguish the literature of the reigns from the Revolution to George I., and are perfectly in the manner of all the verse that Addison has left. On the contrary, there is not a genuine poem of Andrew Marvell's which either in diction, in sentiment, or in cadence, bears any resemblance to these.

“ Marvell died in 1687. Now the whole of his numerous and diversified compositions bear so conspicuously the impress of the age in which he lived, that if they were all anonymous there would be little hesitation to ascribe them to some keen and powerful mind of that generation which had outlived the civil wars and the Restoration, but disappeared before the Revolution of 1688. The volume in question, as written by Marvell himself and by his order, had been in existence more than a century when it came to the hands of Captain Thompson; and the latest manuscript in it, I take for granted, must have been more than fifty years backward in date. This allows for the genuineness of all that his biographer has given, which bears even a faint resemblance to Marvell's avowed productions; but I must say that there appears to me no credible presumptive evidence that he was either the author of the five hymns ascribed to Addison, of the 114th Psalm ascribed to Tickell, or the ballad of ‘William and Margaret,’ published as his own by Mallet. In fact, I do not believe it possible for him, or any author of the school and age to which he belonged, to have constructed verse in the middle of the 17th century, in a style of which no specimens are to be found earlier than the first quarter of the 18th century; and even these are found in the writings of those only whose cast of thought and manner of composition were in all other respects greatly modified—whether for the better or the worse I say not here—from those of antecedent writers, whether in prose or rhyme. Do I speak thus to degrade Andrew Marvell, or to deprive Hull of the glory of anything that her pattern-citizen ever did or

wrote for his own honour, or for that of his reputed birth-place, which is identified with him? Kingston-upon-Hull needs no factitious, no doubtful credit, commercial, intellectual, or literary; and of all patriots, all poets, there is not one who would more disdain to allow a leaf of another's laurel to be entwined with his thick-woven and well-gathered bays than Andrew Marvell."

"On the evening when the first lecture was delivered," says the poet in a letter to Miss Gales, "there was a pouring rain for many hours, and consequently it required no ordinary courage in the lovers of poetry who, (I apprehend) are not ten to one of the other caste, to venture out, amphibious as Hull-born people are or ought to be, to wade or swim through streets like streams. . . . Among my audience was Mr. Stickney, the father of Mrs. Ellis, who lives nine miles off. He is a fine old man—the meek and manly, ruddy and hale original of the Patriarch in 'The Sons of the Soil.' . . . At this time of the year [Nov. 25.] both you and I must be mournfully reminded of the painful yet merciful dispensation towards us and one who was very dear to both [the late Miss Gales], which caused our removal from the Hartshead. I cannot recollect that change without gratitude, and I am sure you must feel as I do in that respect. May the goodness and mercy which have accompanied and followed us all the days of our life hitherto, continue to guide and guard us to the end!"

On Nov. 30. Montgomery returned from Hull: and when Mr. Holland called upon him, he mentioned that he had scarcely sat down in the house where he was entertained on the banks of the Humber, when his hostess showed him a book, which the Rev. J. Scott had bought, perceiving that it referred to the Moravians, and had left it to ascertain whether Montgomery knew anything of it. The poet, on opening one of the volumes, instantly saw that the work was a

collection of slanderous tracts upon the United Brethren, originally published by Rimius, who himself was a recreant member of the fraternity. "Madam," said he, "this is a very vile book: I burnt one copy of it some years ago, to prevent its doing further mischief, and I shall endeavour to do the same with this." When he saw Mr. Scott, he told him he wished to purchase the book, avowing explicitly his object: accordingly he paid for the two volumes, brought them home, and destroyed them! "It is disgraceful," said he, when mentioning the affair, "that misrepresentations, which have often been fully and satisfactorily answered long ago, should be repeated against the Brethren by wilful or ignorant writers." The very peculiar character of many portions of the Moravian Hymn Book having been adverted to, some surprise was expressed that the work had not been revised, and that Montgomery had not been employed on the design. He said he had been repeatedly solicited to undertake the task, especially by two of the Moravian bishops, before the meeting of the last synod of their church. He said if he were twenty years younger he should be very glad to enter upon the undertaking: as it was, all that he could do would be to give them a few hints for the work. Accordingly, they furnished him with an interleaved copy, in which from time to time he pencilled down such alterations as occurred to him. On returning the book, he told his friends that they would probably be as little satisfied with many of his emendations as he was with the original: his only anxiety and wish was, that whatever they might do with his hints, he should not be made to sanction any alterations but such as were strictly his own—and for those he was quite willing to be responsible. He added that eighteen months since he returned the book, and had heard nothing more of the matter.

While at Hull he read before the society which had engaged his lectures, the essay on the "Imperfectness of Historical Records" elsewhere mentioned. An allusion in this essay to "those literary moles — the antiquaries" called forth some remarks from a member of that grave fraternity, to the effect that, in his opinion, the labours of these matter-of-fact illustrators of history were spoken of too disparagingly. Montgomery instantly rose, and said that nothing could be farther from his intention; and he must say that such was his love of truth, and the interest he felt in the class of illustrations alluded to, that he verily believed, if he had not been a poet, he might have been an antiquary. As it was, he assured the meeting that he was so far one in feeling, that if he could be assured, on undoubted evidence, that a single human being, however humble, did actually, under any ascertained circumstances, only walk, eighteen hundred years ago, over the ground on which they stood, that single *fact* would affect him more than the reading of one of the most popular of the fashionable novels of the day. We, who knew him well, and have had so many opportunities of seeing how constantly he individualised his sympathies towards the meanest of his fellow mortals, acting, in a Christian sense, on the sentiment of Terence, "*Homo sum et humani a me nil alienum puto*," can fully appreciate the sincerity with which the poet made this declaration.

He found on his return home a handsome volume, published by Rickerby, entitled the "Parlour Table Book:" the work consisted of a collection of short pieces in prose and verse, written and selected with the taste of a genuine lover of our purer literature, by the author of "Lives of the British Sacred Poets." Besides a formal "Inscription," the book had eleven pages of prefatory matter addressed to Montgomery, and touch-

ing upon various literary topics. The opening and concluding paragraphs, which comprised the whole of immediate personal allusion, were these : — " There is something in the title of the present volumes that renders the inscription of it to yourself peculiarly appropriate. Your own poems have long been the companions of the parlour-window and the fireside, and have obtained for their writer the affection and the admiration of his readers. Accept, then, a book which seeks to awaken the same spirit of Christian thoughtfulness, and to inflame the mind with the same passion for all that is beautiful and all that is good." In conclusion, after adverting to the rich self-reward which awaited the aspirant after an acquaintance with the pure and lofty thoughts of certain rare old authors in prose and verse, and lamenting the vapid character of many fashionable writers of the day, the editor says :—

"If our literature grows still more degraded ; if the admiration of what is lovely and of good report wax still fainter and more remote ; if the stream of corrupting fiction rise from more abundant springs, and sweep with a mightier and more destructive current ;—we are not left without a refuge ; we can still retire into the greener gardens of our elder writers, and cool the fever of our hearts in that home of innocent love and fervid piety which you have built for us in a ' World before the Flood.' Believe me to be, with the sincerest respect and esteem,

" Dear Sir,

" Your faithful friend and servant,

" ROBERT ARIS WILLMOT.

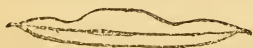
" Kensington, October 28. 1840."

Mr. Willmot, now a clergyman, and author of several pleasing literary works, never saw Montgomery, we believe, except once, for a few minutes, at Hackney ; but they had corresponded together, in consequence of the



stranger, who was at one time a Harrow boy, having sent the poet a little publication called "The Harro-vean."

Writing to Miss Mellin, who had entertained him during his visit at Hull, to assure her of his safe arrival at The Mount, and to thank her for the hospitality and friendship he had enjoyed under her roof, he says, "I know not when I shall be able to despatch this half-written sheet; all that I ought to have said, all that you would desire me to have said, you will please to imagine for yourself to be invisibly indicted in the blank space." The poet, however, in the end occupied that space himself with three postscripts, in one of which he says, "In the upper room of that shell-shop over the Pier, into which I dragged you and Miss Tomlin so unceremoniously, and played the fool so exquisitely before you in purchasing trifles, there was a small shell called the *shuttle*. If you happen to pass that way, purchase it for me whatever be the price. . . . I find Miss Gales has not a specimen of that kind. The shape is something like this —



!!!"\* He rarely failed, when he found a conchological collection for sale, to purchase some rarity for his friend. At the end of a third postscript he says, "Tell Miss T. that when she is pleased to send her heart in a letter to one whom she means to make happy for life, she must deposit it in *one postscript only*, which (knowing little of such matters) I believe ladies generally do: an old bachelor, who has long ago worn out his heart, if ever he had one, may send the fragments in as many parcels as he likes."

\* The poet might well affix a triple note of admiration to this exploit of daring draughtsmanship,—the only attempt of the kind which we ever saw from his hand.



A curious experiment, not to use harsher terms, was made on his good nature in November this year: Miss — wrote to Montgomery, saying that she had heard much about his poetry, and was therefore very desirous of reading it; but being unable, for reasons which she mentioned, to purchase his works, she asked him to *give* her a set! Although he had but one, besides his own marked copy, he immediately made up a parcel containing the three volumes, and sent it to his unknown petitioner in London.

Calling at The Mount one day, Mr. Holland noticed, lying on the poet's table, a straight smooth piece of wood, forming a flat ruler; and, taking it up, Montgomery said, "Now how much do you think Mr. Everett would give for that?" *Holland*: "What is it?" *Montgomery*: "It is a piece of the pear-tree which was planted by the first Moravian missionary that visited the Hottentots, more than one hundred years since: you will find a notice of the tree in the chapters entitled the *African Valley*, in 'Prose by a Poet.' In 1821 this pear-tree produced fifteen sacks of excellent fruit, a considerable portion of which was sent to Europe. Having become generally decayed, it was lately cut down, and my friend Bishop Haalbeck sent me, as a memorial, the piece which you hold in your hand." However different persons might prize or disregard the relic itself, it would require a greater amount of indifference to such matters than either of the biographers can boast of, not to have felt at least a momentary interest in handling a fragment of that venerable missionary tree, under the once wide-spreading branches of which, after he who planted it had been driven from the country half a century, and the baboons had reassumed their haunts at *Bavians' Kloof*, "the industrious successors of the first apostle of South Africa

began their ministry, both of teaching and preaching, converting at once into a school-house and a temple that living memorial and beautiful emblem of the church which George had planted there, but which, unlike it, had been demolished to the root. This emblem and memorial," adds the poet,—for we cannot forbear completing the passage,—“however, had not ceased to be a pledge of that church’s resurrection. Though lost for half a century, and left a prey to all manner of spoilers, it had still been preserved in the midst of devastation, like a tree of life, guarded by cherubim and the flaming sword turning every way, to afford food and shelter, a place for labour, and a sanctuary for worship, to disciples worthy of Him whom they followed, and of the Master whom he and they equally served.”

## APPENDIX.

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(A).

Page 69.

AFTER having adverted to the fact that “the acknowledged talents of the lecturer as a poet, and the testimonials of the press, as well as of private individuals at Nottingham and Leeds, where he had read his essays, fully justified the council in making an engagement with him on terms honourable and satisfactory to both parties,” the writer proceeds:—

“Immediately after the second lecture, many complaints having been made of the dramatic style in which the lecturer read his illustrations, a special meeting of the council was convened, by requisition of five members, for the purpose of taking into consideration the propriety of requesting Mr. Atherstone to adopt a more chastised and temperate mode of reading those quotations from the works of British poets which were announced in his syllabus to be appended to his several lectures; and also to curtail the length of such extracts on future evenings. . . . The terms ‘reading’ and ‘reciting’—however inadequate to express the difference between *impressive* and *violent* utterance of the same passages either of prose or verse—were purposely adopted [by the secretary in his private letter], to avoid others which might have been deemed obnoxious, from a just sense of the delicacy due to the feelings and opinions of a gentleman of no mean rank in the literature of his country, on a

question of taste which might be strenuously disputed or defended either way, by critics as well as by ordinary auditors, according to their peculiar judgments or prejudices. . .

“Mr. Atherstone, in reply to two letters addressed to him [on this subject], readily consented to abridge the length of his illustrations from the poets, but declined to accede to the recommendation of the council and the secretary to alter the style in which he thought best to deliver them. The council hereupon felt themselves absolved from further accountability to Mr. Atherstone’s audiences for the manner of his recitations, and to himself for such consequences as the exercise of his own discretion, contrary to their advice, might bring upon him. In the letter aforementioned, no reference whatever was made either to the lectures themselves as literary compositions, or to the style in which they were delivered; much less was censure of any kind against them either expressed or insinuated. The council, of course, utterly disclaimed having taken any part whatever in the newspaper controversies on the subject; and their forbearance is manifest from the fact, that both the opponents and the defenders of Mr. Atherstone were pleased to find fault with their proceedings in regard to these lectures. . . . Whatever damage, then, Mr. Atherstone may have sustained from the hard treatment which he has received from his antagonists in newspapers, and however little he may have been benefited by the services of friends in the same quarters, having more zeal than prudence, the council of this Society confidently feel that they have done neither dishonour to themselves, nor wrong to their constituents, in having made an engagement with Mr. Atherstone to deliver Lectures on Poetry in Sheffield. With equal confidence, the council may conscientiously affirm that they have done no injustice to Mr. Atherstone, by offering the advice already stated, only remaining silent when they could not vindicate his lectures, without expressing their disapproval of the style of the recitations which accompanied them. Had they done the latter, his censors would have triumphed; and his champions would have been yet more displeased by the official publica-

tion of that vote of the council which (with much irrelevant matter, tending exceedingly to obscure its import) had found its way, without authority, into the papers.

“In conclusion, the council distinctly disavow having done or intended to do anything whatever in disparagement of Mr. Atherstone’s abilities as a lecturer, having totally abstained from controversially either impugning or praising his performances. They deeply lament that he has had to encounter hostility where he might have expected favour; but while they have not, in any way, countenanced the former, he himself knows that, situated as they were, they could not secure the latter. His character as a lecturer stands precisely on the same ground as it stood when he first offered himself to the Society, in November last—on his own independent merits, unaffected by subsequent casualties; nothing that has happened at Sheffield (so far as the council are aware) ought to be pleaded in exception against the credit which he had previously established in that capacity. His readings or recitations, being entirely distinct from the lectures themselves, and not necessarily attached to them—though highly interesting, and generally well-selected—will, of course, be judged of by different audiences according to different standards, and among individuals by rules of taste not easily reduced to universal application.”

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(B).

WOMAN’S LOT. PART I. Page 310.

THE world’s a wilderness of vice,  
No child was born in Paradise;  
Adam had fallen to guilt and shame,  
Before he owned a Saviour’s name;  
Cain in his father’s likeness grew,  
And his more righteous brother slew.

Thenceforth, through every range of life,  
The good and evil are at strife,  
And every Abel would be slain  
By some hereditary Cain ;  
While every Cain, at war with all  
And with himself, in turn must fall ;  
But God restrains the murderer's blow,  
" Thus far, nor farther shalt thou go !"  
Or ages since, by fratricide  
Or self-destruction, all had died,  
And man, from earth's polluted face,  
Cut off the entail of his race.

Hence too, in every part alive,  
The good and evil passions strive,  
And there, as in that ancient tale,  
Vice over virtue must prevail ;  
But He, whose everlasting sway  
Time and eternity obey,  
O'er the dark region of the soul  
Exerts beneficent control,  
Nor lets the legion-fiend within  
Rule in security of sin.  
His light disturbs the darkness there,  
His spirit breathes empyreal air,  
His voice the storm to silence speaks,  
His touch the captive's fetters breaks,  
The blind their Saviour's presence greet,  
The dead come forth their Lord to meet.

A mystery, from ages sealed,  
Truth to my secret ear revealed ;  
Then hearken,—for 't is truth I tell,  
Though shadowed forth in parable.

Heaven's host, in time's perennial flight,  
The sun by day, the moon by night,  
The planets in their narrow bounds,  
The stars in their eternal rounds,



Had measured on the etherial sphere  
The circle of the first full year,  
And each bright habitant of space  
Re-occupied its starting-place,  
Whence, at the new creation's birth,  
They looked upon the infant earth,  
And their benignt influence shed  
O'er Eve and Adam's nuptial bed :  
For joy the sons of morning sang,  
Eternity with rapture rang ;  
Fresh from his hand God's creatures stood,  
He saw them, and pronounced them good.

How did the second year begin ?  
A child was born, was born in sin ;  
The primal curse its victim found,  
Struck the first culprit to the ground,  
And wrung, from Eve's unburthened womb,  
Life,—under sentence to the tomb.  
She, in her pangs of travail, thought  
That death, not life, to birth was brought,  
And shrunk and shrieked, while throes on throes  
Urged the glad crisis of her woes ;  
For, spent with agony, she lay  
As though her soul had passed away,  
Till the babe's cry broke forth ;—ah ! then  
Her spirit darted home again,  
And when she saw a living boy,  
Forgot her anguish in the joy.  
None but a mother knows how sweet  
The moment when such contrasts meet ;  
When, in the first ecstatic kiss,  
Sorrow transforms itself to bliss,—  
Woman's own bliss,—man knows it not,—  
To compensate her harder lot.  
“ Lo ! the fulfilment of his word,  
A man is given me of the Lord !  
My son, my son, art thou indeed  
Th' Avenger ? thou the woman's seed

Whose power the twofold foe must feel?  
He, in the dark, may wound thy heel,  
But thou shalt turn again, and tread  
Down to the dust the serpent's head,  
And in his deepest den below  
The serpent's master feel the blow.  
My son, my son, can such things be?  
Thy parents' fall retrieved by thee?  
At Eden's gate the flaming brand  
Drop from the watching cherub's hand?  
The death-fruit-bearing tree, whose taste  
Laid all this fair creation waste,  
Perish,—and evil then unknown,  
Knowledge of good prevail alone?  
Shall Paradise, our seat erewhile,  
(Without a tempter to beguile,  
And Satan in his dungeon bound,  
No more to desecrate the ground),  
Again become our happy home,  
Whence shall our children's children roam  
The sun's whole circuit, to possess  
And plant the sterile wilderness  
With trees of life, whose boughs shall shoot  
From east to west, whose sacred fruit  
Food to a faithful race shall give,  
That all may eat thereof and live?  
Oh! hasten then, Almighty Power,  
The year, the month, the day, the hour,  
When, in this infant, shall be seen  
All that his father might have been;  
All that his mother's heart conceives,  
Her hope presages, faith believes,  
Of man to innocence restored,  
And earth the Garden of the Lord?"

While Eve, to transport unconfined,  
Eye, ear, and utterance thus resigned,  
And in delirium of delight,  
Bent on her babe unsated sight,

Adam, as in a trance, looked on ;  
His joints were loosed, his colour gone ;  
A cloud of thought his brow o'ercast  
With dark remembrance of the past,  
For he perceived what she had not,  
While he recalled — by her forgot —  
How, when the fatal fruit they proved,  
The elements themselves were moved ;  
And through the frame of Nature ran  
Horror at the first crime of man :  
So, while this joy at home he viewed,  
The same dire portents were renewed,  
Ev'n at the moment of Cain's birth,  
The tremble of the conscious earth,  
Death's shadow, passing through the air,  
The pale, faint lightning's spectral glare,  
And muttering thunder heard to roll  
Less on the ear than through his soul ;  
Signs from without of wrath for sin,  
Which had their counterparts within,  
Remorse, amazement, terror dumb,  
And fear of judgment yet to come.  
Eve in that instant glanced her eye  
On his, absorpt in vacancy ;  
“ Adam ! ” she breathed in tone so mild,  
Then turned, and pointed to the child,  
As though 't were but a thought that crossed  
Her mind, an image seen and lost ;  
Yet to his eye, his ear, that sound,  
That look victorious, entrance found ;  
The withering spell that bound him broke,  
To her, himself, his babe, he woke,  
And the wild turmoil in his breast  
Grew all irradiate, like the west,  
When the clear sun, at close of day,  
Breaks through the thunder-clouds' array,  
And round departing horror throws  
The rainbow's beauty and repose.

He caught the infant in his arms,  
Gazed on its miniature of charms,  
Nor e'er since Eve rose from his side,  
At once his offspring and his bride,  
Had sight so lovely met his eyes.  
When angel-guests in Paradise,  
Were wont at noon to seek his bower  
Or walk with him at twilight hour,  
Their shapes of heavenly mould he saw  
With transport not unmixed with awe;  
But this first form of mortal birth,  
This weakest breathing thing on earth,  
With such strange power upon him stole,  
Like a new soul within his soul,  
His heart began to yearn and melt  
With tenderness before unfelt;  
Ineffable delight upsprung  
Through all his frame, but failed his tongue,  
While the soft murmur of a kiss,  
Love's dearest language, told his bliss,  
And tears, smiles, sighs, love's tokens, shed  
A father's blessing on its head;  
Nor found affection utterance there,  
Till it flew up to heaven in prayer,  
And thence returning mercy-fraught,  
Peace, hope, joy, gladness, with it brought;  
As from heaven's height, a speck at rest,  
The lark darts down upon his nest,  
And fluttering o'er it with spread wings,  
In low, sweet, broken warbles sings,  
To cheer his mate and younglings, then  
Untiring soars aloft again.

Adam the precious babe replaced  
In Eve's glad arms, and both embraced,  
Exclaiming "Blessed be the Lord!  
My life is now a threefold cord;  
From dust I rose, and stood alone,  
Eve sprang from me, and two were one;

Behold ! a greater mystery —  
 A third from both, now twain are three,  
 And three are one, sweet babe, in thee.  
 Thus like the waves on ocean's tide,  
 Shall men on earth be multiplied ;  
 Thus from the fountain of my heart  
 Streams of existence spring and part,  
 Meet, mingle, deepen, swell, and spread,  
 The living doubling o'er the dead.  
 The dead ! ah ! me, that thought, that thought,  
 What devastation sin hath wrought !  
 What the dire issues of my fall,  
 Through one death passing upon all !  
 Oh ! God, the Seed, the Saviour give,  
 That all who die in me, in Him may live."

The cloud again his brow o'ercastr,  
 The bow was in it, and it passed ;  
 The promise shone into his mind, —  
 Eve wept, and Adam stood resigned.

Ockbrook, May 10. 1838.

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(C).

Page 341.

" THOUGH these Essays are avowedly confined to the principal English Poets and their works, yet in *this* city Thomas Chatterton must not be forgotten. His mother's child might indeed have been changed in the cradle, while she was singing a lullaby of the olden time over it, and a fairy imp, resembling it in features, left in its place at some chance moment when her eye was turned away to a shadow flitting across the window of her cottage. For so eccentric were the caprices, so wayward the fancies, so perverse and

yet so wild and beautiful at times the freaks as well as the achievements of this 'marvellous boy,' that scarcely any 'mortal mixture of earth's mould' could previously have been imagined to have uttered such strange (but not 'divine,' as Milton has it in the passage which I am accommodating to this purpose) such strange 'enchanting harmony' as he let loose upon the world in his unchartered strains. The precocity of talent displayed in these was scarcely less extraordinary than would have been the reality of the fable which he passed upon the public, that they were the genuine remains of a minstrel of the fourteenth century. Not Spenser, not Milton, not Shakspeare himself, had each been born two hundred years before his actual date, could have compiled poems of the form in which he brought forth his modern antiques:—not that I would compare the rhapsodies of Chatterton, at sixteen, with the master-pieces of our greatest masters of song, in the maturity of their minds, and in the advanced state of refinement of their country's language, which they grafted yet higher, and on perishable branches of refinement. Far from this; I only insist on the manifest impossibility of any poet in the fourteenth century to have anticipated the style, rhythm, idiom, and every other peculiarity of diction and handling which characterise the verse, not merely of our elder intervening writers, but of the era of Chatterton's own appearance,—not as a new-born genius to adorn his own age, but as one risen from the dead in the shape and garb of Thomas Rowley, a monk in the days of William Canynge, an ancient worthy of this renowned city. The internal evidence of every one of his compositions irrefragably establishes the fact, that they could not, under any conceivable circumstances, have been indited more than one generation earlier than their first publication. Why Chatterton did not come forth in his own name, in his own strength, in his own character, as the author of poems such as Spenser, Shakspeare, or Milton might have been unashamed to own, had they been his contemporaries, and as young as he, is not easily to be accounted for. Had he done thus, and lived to good old age, first following



in the wake of one, then of another, and finally laying his well-trimmed vessel alongside of all the three, there cannot be a question that, at this day, his honour, name, and fame might have been recorded on the same page with theirs in the poetic chronicles of the land. He chose another course in which I shall not dare to track him, because, with all my admiration of his talents, I could not pretend to justify the mode in which he exercised them on many occasions. No preeminence of genius can palliate that which would be righteously condemned in the humblest individual of sound mind, and accountable both to God and man for the faithful, the profitable, the consecrated use of his one talent, or even, *if he had no more, his tithe of one talent*. Of him who had ten let me not presume to be the judge before the public; for if I myself am not at this hour arraigned for errors and transgressions equal to his, though not of the same class, a still small voice in my inmost soul imposes silence by the home, heart-searching question, ‘Who hath made thee to differ, and what hast thou that thou hast not received?’ The merits and the faults of Chatterton are well known, and I take for granted that they are duly appreciated and distinguished the one from the other, in Bristol. Since I came hither, a new memoir of him, by your fellow-citizen Mr. John Dix, has been put into my hands, of which (though I have had little opportunity of looking into it) I may venture to say, that it is well worthy of perusal by those who wish to be better acquainted with the moving accidents of his strange areer, and the great powers of his unexhausted mind, of which he lived but to give few and imperfect specimens of the riches of thought and imagination hidden in it, and prematurely buried in the grave that covers his ashes. A prospectus has also been presented to me of a plan to erect a monument to his memory, countenanced by persons of the highest respectability in this neighbourhood; and, as the sum required is but small, no doubt the project needs only to be known to find favour and patronage. What shall the inscription be? — Let it be honest as well as just, and while it records with due honour his transcendent abilities, and

laments with the tenderness of ingenuous compassion his sufferings and his fate, let it speak a word of warning to the young, the gifted, and the ambitious, to follow him only so far as he followed that which is right, and which is required of all men, at all times, under all circumstances. A few stanzas by Chatterton, though but a fragment, will show the character of his compositions. I take them from those published under the name of Rowley, in antiquated verbiage, or rather in antiquated spelling, for few of the words and none of the phrases are in any sense obsolete. The lines have often been quoted and commended; and I choose them advisedly, because they are among the easiest to be read by so feeble a voice as mine: —

“ ‘When Freedom, drest in bloodstained vest,  
To every knight her war-song sung,  
Upon her head wild weeds were spread,  
A gory anlace by her hung,’ &c.

“But our native country and our native poetry are indebted to Bristol for more than Chatterton and Rowley; and both are more indebted to Bristol than to any other city in the realm, except London and Edinburgh (if even they may be excepted), for poets who raised poetry from the dust at the latter end of the last century, and who, after Cowper, mainly exalted her to that glorious eminence on which she held supreme dominion in literature between the years 1796 and 1825; for from the latter, her culminating point, she has indeed

“ ‘Fallen, fallen, fallen, fallen,  
Fallen from her high estate;’

and if she be not weltering in her blood, she is yet lying in the trance of suspended animation. But if *Bristol* has thus laid not *England* only, but all lands where British poetry is relished and read, under obligation, as having been the place and the scene where Southey, Coleridge, and Wordsworth first tried their prowess and achieved their first triumphs in song, Bristol is under proportionate obli-

gation to one of her most amiable and accomplished citizens, himself a poet of no mean rank, and whose merits have never been duly appreciated for having been the first patron of the youthful triumvirate, by such aid as a bookseller of taste, liberality, and enterprise alone could lend. Joseph Cottle,—and I pronounce his name with affection as well as veneration, — Joseph Cottle at that time did more to foster, encourage, and compensate rising talent (poetic talents I mean) than has been done (so far as I know) to help or reward its possessors by any one or by all its noble and wealthy patrons from one end of the kingdom to the other. And so long as Bristol shall have cause to be proud of Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey, let Bristol not be ashamed of Joseph Cottle.”

END OF THE FIFTH VOLUME.

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